

# The History of Parish Registers in England



John Southerden  
Burn



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**Registrum Ecclesiae Parochialis,**

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**THE HISTORY**

OF

**PARISH REGISTERS IN ENGLAND,**

ALSO OF

THE REGISTERS OF SCOTLAND, IRELAND, THE EAST AND WEST  
INDIES, FOREIGN COUNTRIES, DISSENTERS, THE FLEET,  
KING'S BENCH, MINT, CHAPEL ROYAL, &c. &c.

WITH

**Observations on Bishops' Transcripts,**

AND THE

PROVISIONS OF THE ACT OF THE 5th GEORGE III. CAP. 146.

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"All the property in this country, or a large part of it, depends on Registers, and we must see our way clear before we shake the authenticity of Registers."

Mr. JUSTICE BEST, p. 204.

"From what I have had occasion to observe, I conceive there is nothing of more importance than the endeavouring to deposit, in some secure place, the Registers of Births, Baptisms, and Funerals."—Mr. BARON GARROW, p. 209.

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BY

JOHN SOUTHERDEN BURN.

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1820



## P R E F A C E.

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THE Author's professional pursuits having frequently afforded him the perusal of Parish Registers, he some years since commenced a collection of miscellaneous particulars concerning them. In the course of his searches for the History of these Records, he was led to observe that there was no work exclusively on the subject, excepting Mr. Bigland's "Observations on Parish Registers," published so long since as 1786, and which, although it contains a portion of the history alluded to, appears to have been written to inform the public of the establishment, at the Heralds' College, of a Register of Births; in addition to this, it is become a scarce Work. He has, therefore, put together the contents of his Portfolio, and endeavoured to arrange them in some degree of order, hoping they will prove useful and amusing, or, at all events, that they will lead the attention of the

public to the consideration of a Record in which the interest of every individual is concerned.

That a correct Registry of every Birth, Baptism, Marriage, and Burial is of the greatest national importance, will not admit of question, and the subject has already occupied the attention of Government, from time to time, for nearly three centuries past. In 1812, when the last Bill for regulating these Records was passing through Parliament, the subject received great attention "out of the House;" since the passing of the Act, however, little has been said or done, and the anxiety previously shown appears to have abated, under the idea that the Act had provided for every thing that was essential to the good keeping and preservation of these Records.

It is to be regretted that this is by no means the case, as it is defective in two material points. The one is, that it does not provide for sufficient particulars in the Entries, in order to prove, (or *lead to* the proof of) identity and descent—The other, that although there is a provision for a Transcript of every Register to be annually deposited in the Bishops' Archives, in order to guard against accidents, and detect forgery or interpolation in the original Register, yet



there is no power given to *compel* such transmission. The perusal of the following pages will show that these defects are not inconsiderable, but are such as require immediate amendment, in order that the Parish Registers of the Country may be made more useful, in affording information of the greatest importance to individuals, and in furnishing Government with the basis of calculations tending to promote the general good.

Under the present system, Parish Registers are greatly devoid of interest, and contain no more than the bare Record of Baptism, Marriage, and Burial, without note or comment; but the Registers of an earlier period comprise Memoranda of every description, and it is intended, in the following pages, to give specimens of them, as illustrative of some of the manners and customs of the last three centuries, and of events which occurred at a time when the means of publicity, by provincial papers, &c. were scarcely known: indeed, in many instances, almost the only particulars of Parishes, of its inhabitants, and of its local occurrences, are those recorded in the "*Parish Register.*"

In page 57 will be seen a reference to the Registers of Catholics and Protestants, which Cardinal Pole, in 1555,



directed to be made. Should one of these happen to be in the possession of any individual perusing this work, the Author would feel obliged by receiving a communication of its contents, or of any other entries or particulars worthy of notice, relating to the subject of Parish Registers generally.

27, HENRIETTA STREET, BRUNSWICK SQUARE.

September 25th, 1849.

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THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
PARISH REGISTERS.

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CHAPTER I.

OF THE ORIGIN OF PARISH REGISTERS.

THE birth, marriage, and death of persons being occurrences of so much importance, these events have been recorded from a very remote period. The Bible gives, in the Book of Genesis, the genealogies or pedigrees of the patriarchs from Adam to Noah, and from Noah to the Twelve Patriarchs. The fourth book of Moses mentions the numbers of all the males of the children of Israel, (except those of the Tribe of Levi,) from twenty years old and upwards, to be 603,550; for Moses and Aaron, in the Wilderness of Sinai, "assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their *pedigrees* after their families, by the house of their fathers." (1)

In the same way Moses afterwards numbered the males of the Children of Levi, from a month old and upwards; and also the *first-born* of the males of the Children of Israel from the same age.

In the plains of Moab, the "Sum of all Israel" was again taken by Moses and Eleazar, and it is clear that it

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(1) Numbers xxvi. 64.

was not a mere *numbering* of the people, but that the particulars of each individual were ascertained; for it is added, that of the 624,730 men, of whom account was thus taken on the plains of Moab, was not one of those who had been numbered in Sinai.<sup>(1)</sup>

The first book of Chronicles also contains the genealogies of the children of Adam to the twelve patriarchs, and mentions that they "were written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah."

After the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, Nehemiah obtained leave of Artaxerxes, (to whom he was cup-bearer) to go up to Jerusalem and rebuild the city of the sepulchres of his fathers; after having done this, he relates, (Nehemiah, vii. 5.) "My God put into my heart to gather together the nobles, and the rulers and the people, that they might be reckoned by genealogy; and I found a *register* of the genealogy of them which came up at the first." And of so great authority was this register, that he goes on to relate that some of the priests whom he found at Jerusalem, "sought their register among those that were reckoned by genealogy, but it was not found, therefore were they, as polluted, put from the priesthood."

Registers were kept both at Athens and Rome, in which were inserted the names of such children as were to be brought up, as soon as they were born. Marcus Aurelius required all free persons to give in accounts of their children, within thirty days after the birth, to the treasurer of the empire, in order to their being deposited in the Temple of Saturn, where the public acts were kept. Officers were also appointed as public registrars in the provinces, that recourse might be had to their lists of names, for settling disputes, or proving any person's freedom. Servius Tullius instituted the Lustrum, by which all the citizens were to assemble in the Campus Martius in complete armour, and in their respective classes, once in five years, and there to give an exact account of their

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(1) Numbers, i. 18.



families and fortune. In order, also, to ascertain the number of births and burials, he directed, that when a child was born, its kindred should bring a piece of money into the *Ærarium* of Juno Lucina; and when any died, into that of Venus Libitina. This custom being afterwards abolished, was revived by Augustus Cæsar, at the birth of children; it was, in fact, a general Register, which this Emperor directed to be made of his whole empire, about the time of our Saviour's birth, and which is called by St. Luke "a Taxing."

In France there appears to have been Registers as early as 1308, but whether they were in the form of public records, or whether they were universally kept in that kingdom, is not clearly ascertained. The "*Memoires pour la Vie de Petrarque*," 4to. 1764, has the following observation:—

"Vellutello assure qu'il trouva deux de ces registres chez le Curé de Cabrieres, qui commençoient l'an 1308 & finissoient l'an 1373 (dans quelques éditions, 1384) il fit ochercher depuis le commencement jusqu'en 1320 parmi plusieurs Laüres, dont il etoit fait mention dans ces registres, il y en avoit une, fille d'Henri de Chiabau, Seigneur de Cabrieres, qui fut baptisée le 4 Juin 1314."

In order to remedy the disorders occasioned by the frequency of divorces in Spain, the great Cardinal Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo, in a Synod held by him in that Diocese in 1497, put a stop to them by the institution of Parish Registers, which is thus recorded by Marsolier, in his "*Histoire du Ministère du Cardinal Ximenes*", tom. 1, liv. 2, pa. 263.

"Il s'etoit glissé en ce tems là un désordre en Espagne, qui étoit suivi de quantité d'abus. Les divorces y étoient fort fréquens, et ce qui les rendoit si communs étoit qu'aussitôt que deux personnes ma-

riées, pour quelque raison que ce pût-être, avoient envie de se séparer, ils n'avoient qu'à supposer qu'ils avoient tenu ensemble un enfant sur les Fonts de Baptême, ils ne manquoient jamais de témoins vrais ou supposés pour l'attester, et sur cela les parties se séparaient.<sup>(1)</sup> Cette licence avoit introduit en Espagne une Infinité de mariages illícites. L'Archevêque se crut obligé de remédier à ce désordre; & pour en venir à bout & empêcher qu'on ne supposât faux sur un sujet si important, il fut le premier qui ordonna qu'il y auroit dans toutes les Paroisses un Régistre où l'on écriroit exactement les noms de ceux qui seroient baptisés, de leurs peres, meres, parains, maraines, & des temoins qui avoient assistés au Baptême, avec l'année, le mois, et le jour de cette ceremonie.

L'on a vû depuis de quelle utilité a ete cette ordonnance dans le promotion aux ordres sacrés, dans l'entrée aux Benefices, dans les tutelles, & dans plusieurs autres rencontres; c'est ce qui l'a fait recevoir depuis dans toute l'Eglise."

There have been various opinions as to the precise period when Parish Registers were first kept in *England*. Mr. Cole, in his MSS. in the British Museum mentions having read that, " the Register of Hornead Magna begins

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(1) This was formerly considered an impediment in this country; for in 1462, John Howthon, of Tonbridge, was sentenced by the Consistory Court of Rochester to be whipt three times round both market and church for having married Dionysia Thomas, for whom his former wife had been godmother. The like spiritual relation occasioned (Jan. 7, 1465), a dissolution of the marriage between John Trevennock and Joan Peckham; Letitia, the former wife of the said John having been godmother to a child of the said Joan "quondam Letitia prior uxor dicti Joh'is prolem dicti Johannis de sacro fonte levavit."

On Dec. 29, 1472, William Lovelasse, of Kingsdown, was cited to appear before the Official of the then Bishop of Rochester, on a charge of having married his spiritual sister, viz. a woman whom his mother had held at her confirmation "quam mater dicti W<sup>m</sup>i tenuit ad confirmationem."—(THORPE'S CUSTOMALS.)

in 1538, being 37 years after the first Institution of Parish Registers, which commenced in 1501, 16 Hen. VII."

Nicholls, in his History of Leicester, when noticing the Register of Cottesbach, which begins in 1558, states it to be "37 years after the first Institution of these Parochial Records by the Lord Cromwell, in the 13th year of Hen. 8th, 1521." But at this time, Cromwell, if in England, was a private individual, and in Cardinal Wolsey's service, and therefore unlikely, except through the Cardinal's influence, to institute this practice.

Dr. Thorpe, and Jacobs, (the Author of the Law Dictionary) state them to have been instituted by Lord Cromwell "Anno 13 Hen 8. while he was Vicar-General to the King." But there is an evident mistake in one of these particulars; for Cromwell (as will presently be noticed) was not made Vicar-General until 1536, 28 Hen. VIII, and as an error would be more likely to occur with respect to the particular year of the reign, than with the individual under whose administration the law was made, (especially as the office of Vicar-General was one of novel creation, and was first conferred by Hen. the Eighth, on Cromwell) it is a fair presumption that Dr. Thorpe was incorrect in stating the first period, namely, that of the 13 Hen. VIII.

Whittaker, in his History of Sheffield, states them to have been kept "in pursuance of Cromwell's injunction in 1534," and the Annals of Shrewsbury state their first use in 1499. But Dr. Prideaux, the Bishop of Worcester, in his Directions to Churchwardens, says "Parish Registers were first ordered by the Lord Vicegerent Cromwell, in the 30th year of King Hen. the Eighth, 1538, and from thence all Parish Registers have their beginning." Bishop Burnett, Bishop Kennett, Bishop Nicolson, Stow, and many other authors, who have treated on this subject, agree with Dr. Prideaux.

But in order to assist in forming a correct conclusion on this point, it will be well to observe the dates of Cromwell's political preferment. He was the son of a black-

smith at Putney; when arrived at manhood, he went abroad, and visited several foreign countries, and in 1510 he went to Rome. Upon his return to England, (or shortly afterwards) he entered the service of Cardinal Wolsey; and upon the dissolution of the Cardinal's household in 1529, he was taken into the King's service, and in 1531 knighted. In 1535 he was appointed Visitor-General of Monasteries, and on the 18th of July in the following year, Vicar-General. In the September following, he issued certain Injunctions to the Clergy, which did not contain any mention of Registers; but in those which issued on the 8th Sept. 1538, was comprised the one which is to be found in a subsequent Chapter.

It is not at all improbable, that Cromwell conceived the idea of establishing Parish Registers in England from the Institution of Cardinal Ximenes in Spain, which in his travels he no doubt had seen or heard of; but it is not likely that he had an opportunity of enforcing the practice in this country, until the time of his entering into Henry's service in 1529.

In pursuance of his Injunction in 1538, a great many Registers were immediately commenced, although from various causes comparatively few are now in existence.

In the Churchwardens' accounts of 1538, for the Parish of St. Margaret, Westminster, is the following item:—

“ Paid for a Book to registre in the names of burials, weddings and Christenings 2<sup>d</sup>. ”

Now this being a parish in the immediate vicinity of the Court, it is most probable that the practice of Registration was commenced there immediately upon the injunction being made; and the manner in which the item is worded, tends to confirm the opinion that this was the first book, purchased for the purpose.

In order to strengthen the supposition that the Injunction of 1538 was the first containing any order for Registers, it will be necessary to remove any opinion to



the contrary derived from the circumstance of Nicholls's History of Leicestershire, stating the Register of Kegworth, to commence in 1516; or of Pennant mentioning the little Church of Gwaynyscor, in Wales, to be "*remarkable* for its ancient Register;" or from the belief that the Register of Kirkham, in Lancashire, begins in 1529, and that of Boughton Blean, in Kent, so long since as the 15th Century.

Some pains have been taken to ascertain the fact of these cases; and first, with respect to the Register of Kegworth, which Thoresby informs us begins in 1684, (168 years later than the date given by Nicholls.) The Register Books, upon a recent inspection by the author, were found to be kept in the Vestry of the Church. The oldest was in detached parts, but kept together in an old vellum cover. It commenced in 1556 only. The Rector, Dr. Parkinson, Dean of Chester, very kindly mentioned his having been Rector in that parish 36 years, and had never heard of any earlier Register, and was confident none had been lost during his incumbency. It should also be remarked, that the book alluded to is likely to be the *first* in that parish, from the circumstance of its commencing in 1556, which was immediately after the order of the National Synod, held by Cardinal Pole, in the reign of Philip and Mary.

Then as to the Register of Gwaynyscor, Pennant does not state the date of it; yet, by his making the Church "*remarkable* for its ancient Register," it would lead to an inference that it was *prior* to 1538, because Registers of *that* date are by no means remarkable, or very uncommon. The title, however, of the book, as communicated by a clergyman in that neighbourhood, is as follows:—

"Liber registralis et Parochialis de Gwaynyscor  
intitulatus et inceptus fuit vicesimo die Septem-  
bris Anno Domini 1538, et anno regni Henrici,  
Octavi, Dei gratia Anglie et Francie Regis fidei



Defensoris et domini Hibernie in terris Supremi  
capitis Ecclesie Anglicane tricessimo."

Thirdly, as to Kirkham; a certificate is now before the author, of the date of 1529, and is to the following purport:—

"Janie

"1529 Jn<sup>o</sup> Weton (de Weton) & Eliz Scarisbricke xxvj"

but upon reference to the Register, it appears to be an original document, only so far back as 1618, although the book commences with the year 1529, the former part having been "taken at the commencement of publique authoritie out of ancient Copies and Minutes, and copied out by the aforesaid Thomas Robinson."

Lastly, of Boughton Blean. From a very polite Communication from the Rev. T. W. Wright, Vicar of this Parish, it appears that the oldest Church Book (1) which contains the Parish Accounts from 1530, has no entry of marriage or burial prior to 1538, and only one of birth, and this is on the blank part of a leaf, having the date of 1533 at the top of the page, and has been made (as will appear upon the face of it), 45 years subsequently; it stands thus:—

"Edward Songer was borne on Witsonday xv<sup>o</sup> in  
anno dni. Millimo. Quinges<sup>mo</sup> Tricessimo quarto  
and was one hole yere old whan Corpa. Chri.  
play was playd in Boughton Street.

P<sup>r</sup> me

Edwardus Songer 1578."

Had there been a Register kept at the time of Edward Songer's birth, 1534, this memorandum by him in 1578

(1) In this book is a mention made of *lotteries*, which are now rather inexplicable.

"1570 Also they charge themselves w<sup>th</sup> the rep<sup>ts</sup> of xv<sup>th</sup> v<sup>th</sup>. in thands of

"Ric. Carl<sup>d</sup>. by him rec<sup>d</sup>. of Throweley w<sup>ch</sup> came from the lottery"

and in 1574 is money received from a lottery for "castyng the bells."

would not have been necessary; and that there was *not* one, is also to be inferred from the one now in existence, beginning in the 1st year of Elizabeth, when a special Injunction was issued.

Manning's History of the County of Surrey, in noticing the Parish of Elsted, observes, "The Parish Register is of the *earliest* date, beginning 30th Aug. 1538, the year in which the Act passed for establishing these useful records." So far he accords with the generally received opinion, but in another part of the History, he states the Register of West Clandon to commence in 1536, and this leads to a consideration of those circumstances which favour the supposition, that some order was made for the keeping Parish Registers *before* the year 1538.

In 1536, a large body of insurgents got together in Yorkshire, to the number of 40,000, who paraded with several priests at their head, with crosses and banners; and for the purpose of drawing in the common people, they gave out "that the king designed to get all the gold of England into his hands, under colour of recoinage it; that he would seize all unmarked cattle, and all the ornaments of parish churches, and they should be forced to pay for christnings, marriages, and burials (orders having been given for keeping Registers thereof) and for licences to eat white bread." (1)

The following is a list of the grievances at that time circulated, in order to enlist the lower orders into the rebellion:—(2)

- "1. The first is that no infant shall receive the blessed Sacrament of Baptisme, bott onlesse an trybett to be paid to the King.
- "2. The second is that no man vnder xx' lands shall eyte no brede made of Wheat, ner Capon, Chekyn, Gois, ner Pigge, bott onlesse to pay a trybett to the King.

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(1) Carte's Hist. of England.

(2) Speed, Hist. of Great Brit.

"3. The third is that for every ploghe-land the King will have on trybett, with other diverse extreme vrgent causes, and hertely fare ye well."

It must be observed, that this insurrection occurred at the latter end of the year 1536, at which time it appears by Carte, that orders had been given for keeping Registers.

Most of the religious houses, before the Reformation, kept Registers (1) of public as well as private transactions, in books called "The Chartulary," "Leiger Book," "Necrology or Obituary," "Register," "Chronicle," &c. The *Obituary* was "a parchment or vellum record of the death of kings, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priests, monks, benefactors, and others, interspersed at times with biographical notes. The Register contained its members, revenues, possessions, patrons, their genealogies, names of persons buried in the precincts of the Religious House, and of others married there." (2) After the burial of any brother of a religious order, a Monk was sent with the *Breve*, or notice of his death to other houses; and when it was entered in their Obituary, he took a copy

(1) Many of the Colleges in Oxford did the same, particularly Merton College, where is a curious account of the sweating-sickness in England, with many other particulars.

All churches were formerly privileged with the right of affording "sanctuary," although the smaller ones were not often resorted to. Monasteries had also the same privilege. Registers were kept of all persons taking sanctuary, with the nature of the offences, in respect of which they sought to escape the punishment of the law, great numbers resorted to sanctuary for nonpayment of debts. In the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, No. 4892, is a Register of persons who had taken sanctuary for different crimes at the Monastery of St. John Beverley, during the latter end of the 15th century. The following is one of the entries:—

"Rob'tus Alestre de Notyngham in Com. Ville de Notyngham gentlman t'cio die Maii anno Edw. iv post Conquestu' Anglie xviii venit ad pacem s'ci Joh'is Beverlaci p'morte Joh'is HHII nuper de villa Westm in com Midd Yoman, p'ipsum interfectum apud Notyngham predictam xvi die Aprilis anno r. sup' d'i sup' d'cto, et accepto sacramento secundum consuetud. idem Rob'tus Alestre admissus est et receptus ad pacem p' d'ctam, &c.—Regist. Bev. fol. 18.

(2) Grimaldi's Genealogi Adjutor.

of the entry, which was called *Titulus*, and brought it back with him.

It would have excited surprise, that so few, comparatively, of these books are in existence, had not John Ball informed us that, "the Library Books of Monasteries were reserved by the purchasers of those houses, to serve their jakes, to scour their candlesticks, and to rub their boots; some were sold to grocers, soap-sellers, and some sent over the sea to the book-binders not in small number, but at times whole ships full. A merchant bought two noble libraries for 40'."

The injunction of Cromwell was highly necessary upon the dissolution of these Monasteries; for thereupon followed the dispersion of the Monks, who were in those times the principal Registrars, and were, of course, acquainted with the art of writing. A great portion of their time was employed in copying and illuminating the charters, deeds of gifts, &c. affecting the religious houses to which they belonged, many of which now remain a specimen of correctness, neatness, and patience. The art of printing has now superseded the necessity of similar labours. It is curious to remark, that by many charters granted during the period from the seventh to the eleventh century, by persons of the highest rank, it appears they could not subscribe their names. "Several of them remain where kings and persons of great eminence affix *Signum crucis manu propria pro ignoratione literarum*. From this circumstance came the phrase of *signing* instead of *subscribing* a document. They used no seals but the cross, and as whatsoever bore that sign was looked upon by them as sanctified, so they religiously and uniformly applied it as an amulet or preservative of their charters against injuries and evil minded persons."<sup>(1)</sup>

The following Letter, written by the Abbot of Westminster to the Prior of St. Milburgh's Priory at Wenlock,

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(1) Green's Worcester.

so lately as 1489, will serve to shew that a "fair writer and maker of capital letters" in those days was considered a person of no mean attainments:—

"Reverent Brother in Crist we grete you well—and it is so that one Edward Botiller, a Brother of ours hath often and diverse tymes praied and desired us licence to be dismissed out of our Obedience, and he desireth to be a Brother of your place and your obedience and hath grete desire to be with you and in that Contree, at which desire we have licenced the said Edward and geve hym a Dimission under our seale, the same Edward hath competent lerning and understondyng and can syng both playn song and pricked song, and also a faire writer, a flourisher and maker of Capital Lettres—Wherefore I pray you that ye will admitte the same Edward Botiller to be a Brother of your place and under your Rule and Obedience—And God preserve you—Written at our monastery of Westm. the 9th day of Aprill (1489)."

The general dissolution of Monasteries took place in the year 1536, and Cromwell being Visitor-General, must have been well conversant with the several books kept by these houses, and this will also appear by the articles which he exhibited at his visitations; it would therefore be a little surprising, that two years should elapse before any order upon the subject of registration was made.

In further support of the supposition of an earlier order, it must be remarked as a very strong feature, that there are actually several Registers commencing, or having entries prior to 1538, (1) namely:—

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(1) In Taylor's Collections for Northamptonshire, (he says), "Maidford," "Register, made the 16th day of April A° 1599, from an imperfect Register from 1587, and before that time, from the year 1530." Lansd. MSS. No. 729.



Wolverton, Buckinghamshire .... 1536  
 West Clandon, Surrey ..... 1536  
 Perlethorpe, Nottinghamshire .... 1528

*Wolverton* is a parish in or near Stoney Stratford, the title of the Register is---

"Iste Liber pertinet Parochiæ Wolvertonis, Teste Roberto Reignold Vicario Ejusdem:"

under which some person has written:—

"Of the Tribe of Manasses

"Non Estimandus unius Assis."

There are 24 Entries only prior to Sept. 1538, among which are the following:—

Baptisms.. 1537 Jan. 13 Margueret Longueville.  
                   1538 April 8 Mary Longueville.  
 Burials.... 1536 Oct. 4 Sir Thomas Longueville.  
                   1537 Nov. 12 Joane Longueville.  
                   1537 Nov. 22 Sir John Longueville.

*West Clandon*.—The Title of this Register is:—

"A Register Book for the Parish of Weste Clandon:"

and there are nine entries prior to September 1538, of these the following are the first three:—

"Anno Domini 1536, Twenty eighth day of August was buried Thomas Marten."

"12 of September was baptized Lawrence Elliot, Sonne of Richard Elliott and Julian his Wife."

"Anno Dm. 1537—9 of May was married W<sup>m</sup>. Stent and Agnes his Wife."

The Register of *Perlethorpe* (which is a chapelry in the parish of Edwinstowe, in the county of Nottingham), had the following title, although the ravages of time have rendered it now illegible. To this will be added the first

page of the Register, comprising the whole period from its commencement to 1538.

"The Register of all Suche as have bynne christened, maryed, and buryed, in the parish of Parlthorp, and Thow'sbye, sence the yeare of our Lord, 1528."

1528	Christened.	Maryed.	Buryed.
	Thom... S..... th Sonne of ..... the 30 <sup>th</sup> of Marche	An Entry illegible.	An Entry illegible.
1529	..... Sonne of ..... ..... of Juli	..... married to ..... the xj.....	Do.
1530	Entry illegible.	Entry illegible.	Blank.
1531	Blank.	Do.	Entry illegible.
1532	Entry illegible.	Do.	Do.
1533	Do.	Do.	Do.
1534	Do.	Do.	Blank.
1535	Do.	Do.	Entry illegible.
1536	Do.	Blank.	Do.
1537	Blank.	Entry illegible.	Do.
1538	Elizabeth ..... .....	Do.	Anne ..... was buryed the, ... First daye of June.
1539	Anne ..... was christened. ....	Do.	Blank.

Thus it appears, that although this Register has been mentioned to continue regularly till November 24, 1641, there are not more than twenty-eight entries prior to Croxwell's order in 1538; and had it not been for information contributed by the Rev. Theophilus Sampson, curate

of Edwinstowe, that "from the dates, and certain slight variations of the hand-writing, it might be inferred, that all these entries were made at the time when the respective ceremonies were performed;" a contrary conclusion might fairly be laid down; and even the information of the variation of hand writing, is far from being conclusive, as it is strange that in twelve successive years, there should never have been more than one entry of baptism, one of marriage, and one of burial, per annum. Another fact appears, on the first page of this Register; namely, that during these twelve years there should have been more marriages than christenings, a disproportion which shews very clearly, one of two facts, either that the entries were made in 1538, from recollection, or from the information of the parties concerned, or that the Register was most imperfectly kept.

Upon consideration of the whole subject, it may be fairly conjectured, that an order (though, perhaps, an informal or imperfect one) was made in 1536, especially as two Registers certainly have been shewn to commence in that year. And with respect to any still earlier Register, it is not at all improbable that the clergyman of the parish kept private memoranda of the several duties he performed connected with his office, and when the order was made in 1538, that he compiled the Register from those memoranda.

In addition to this it has been already observed, that formerly all or many of the churches near great monasteries, were only chapels of ease to the conventual church, in which, or in the cemetery belonging to it, they buried; but all other church rites were performed in the respective chapels. The priests performing duty at these chapels were supplied from the larger establishments, where they must have been conversant with the practice of registering, and probably some of them adopted it in the chapels.

It is much to be regretted, that the 19th section of

the Act of Parliament, passed in 1812, directing lists of all Registers, then in every parish, together with the periods at which they respectively commenced and terminated, &c. to be transmitted to the Registrar of the respective Dioceses, has been complied with but very partially. In the Diocese of London, only four or five of these lists have been transmitted.

## CHAPTER II.

ACTS OF PARLIAMENT—CANONS—INJUNCTIONS—ORDINANCES, &c. &c. RELATING TO PARISH REGISTERS.

AFTER it had been enacted in the reign of Henry VIII. 1534, that the Church of England should no longer be subject to the Pope, and that the King was the supreme head of it, all Monasteries, not having lands above the value of £200 by the year, were given to the King; and Cromwell, (" Lord Privy Seal, Vicegerent to the King's Highness,") in the 30th Henry VIII. Sept. 1538, issued an injunction to the following effect:—

" In the name of God Amen. By the authority and commission of the excellent Prince Henry, by the Grace of God King of England and of France, Defensor of the Faith, Lord of Ireland, and in Earth Supream Head under Christ of the Church of England. I, Thomas Lord Cromwell, Privy Seal, and Vicegerent to the King's said Highness, for all his jurisdiction ecclesiastical within this realm, do for the advancement of the true honor of Almighty God, increase of vertue, and discharge of the King's Majesty, give and exhibit unto you these Injunctions following, to be kept, observed, and fulfilled, upon the pains hereafter declared:—

" First, That you shall truly observe, and keep all and singular the King's Highness Injunctions given unto you heretofore, in my name," &c.

" *Item*, That you and every parson, vicar, or curate within this Diocese, for every Church keep one Book or Register, wherein he shall write the day and year of every Wedding, Christening, and Burial, made within your parish for your time, and so every man succeeding you likewise, and also there insert every persons name,

that shall be so wedded, christned, and buried. And for the safe keeping of the same Book, the parish shall be bound to provide of their common charges one sure coffer, with two locks and keys, whereof the one to remain with you, and the other with the Wardens of every parish wherein the said Book shall be laid up, which Book ye shall every Sunday take forth, and in the presence of the said Wardens or one of them, write and record in the same, all the Weddings, Christnings, and Burials made the whole week afore, and that done, to lay up the Book in the said coffer as afore; and for every time that the same shall be omitted, the party that shall be in the fault thereof, shall forfeit to the said Church iij<sup>s</sup>. iiij<sup>d</sup>. to be employed on the reparation of the said Church."

The subject of Parish Registers also formed one of the Injunctions given by Edward VI. in 1547 (<sup>1</sup>), "to all and singular his loving subjects, as well of the Clergy as of the Laity," and which was almost a literal copy of that issued by Cromwell, except that the penalty was directed "to be employed to the poore box of that parishe."

Extract from King Edward's Injunctions, "whereof parte were geven unto them heretofore by thauthoritie of his mooste deerely beloved father, King Henry the Eight, of mooste famouse memory, and parte are now made, and gevyn by his Majestie—" (<sup>1</sup>)

"Also, that the parson, vicar, or curat, and parishioners of evry parishe within this realm, shall, in their churches and chapels, kepe one booke or regester, wherein they shall write the daye and yere of everye wedding, christening, and burial, made in their parishe for their tyme, and so every man succeeding

(1) In this year all Episcopal authority was suspended for a time, while the Ecclesiastical visitors then appointed, went through the several Dioceses to enforce divers injunctions, and, amongst others, that relating to Parish Registers.

(2) Miscel. lib. p. 490, MS. Ben. Colls.



them likewise. And also, therein shall write every parson's name that shall be so wedded, christned, or buried; and for the saufe keeping of the same booke, the parrishe shall be bound to provide, of their common charges, one sure coffer, with two locks and keyes, whereof thone to remain with the parson vicar or curate, and thother with the wardeynes of every parrishe church or chapell wherein the saide booke shall be layde up, whiche booke they shall every Sondag take furthe, and in the presence of the said wardeynes, or one of them, write and recorde in the same, all the weddings, christenyngs, and burialles, made the hole weeke before, and that doon, to lay up the booke in the said cofer as afore, and for every tyme that the same shall be omitted, the partye that shall be in the faulte thereof, shall forfait to the said Church 3<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup> to be employed to the poore men's box of that parrishe."

And in the same year one of the articles to be enquired of in the Visitations to be had within the Diocese of Canterbury was—

"*Item*.—Whether they have one Book or Register safely kept, wherein they write the day of every Wedding, Christning and Burying."

And in the same year 1547, Nov. 15. "A Bill for a Treasure-House in every shire, for keeping of the Records," was read the first time in the House of Commons; it does not however appear to have been further proceeded with.(')

A third order may be met with in the Statutes of the National Synod, held by Cardinal Pole, in the reign of Philip and Mary, about 1555, by which it was directed, that with respect to Parish Churches, the following particulars were (amongst others) to be observed by the Bishops in their Visitations.

"If the parish priest had a Register with the names

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(1) *Journals of H. C.* vol. i. p. 1.

of those who were baptized, of the Sponsors, of the married, and the dead."

And in 1557, among the Cardinal's articles touching the Clergy, was one, "Whether they do keep the Book or Register of Christening, Burying, and Marriages, with the name of the Godfather and Godmother."

In the first year of Queen Elizabeth, Anno 1559, an Injunction was issued nearly in the same words, and to the same tenor, as that by Edward VI. except that the penalty is directed by her Injunction to go in moieties to the poor box, and the repair of the church.

And amongst the Articles to be inquired in the Visitations of the same year were the following:--

"Whether they have one Book or Register kept, wherein they write the day of every Wedding, Christening and Burying."

*Item*, "How many persons have for religion died by fire, famine, or otherwise, or have been imprisoned for the same."

*Item*, "That you make a true presentment of the number of all persons which died within your parishes sithence the Feast of St. John the Baptist, which was in the year of our Lord God 1558, unto the Feast last past, making therein a plain, distinct declaration, how many men, women, and men-children, the same were, and the names of the men."

On the 9th of March 1562-3, another Bill was read a first time in the House of Commons<sup>(1)</sup>, intituled—

"A Bill to authorize every Archbishop and Bishop to erect one Office of Registership of all the Church Books, to be kept in every Diocese," and was "Written by Thomas Bowesey, and presented to Archbishop Parker, for his approbation."

After reciting the order of the 30th Henry VIII. and the good policy of it, that a great deal of abuse and neglect

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(1) Journals, vol. i, p. 68.

existed in the practice thereby enjoined : It enacted, that the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and all Bishops, should erect within their several Dioceses one office of Registership and Register, to "survey, safe kepe, and streightly looke" to the said Church Book, and the same to register in "some decent book of parchment," for a perpetual memory and testimony of the premises.—*That* all Parsons, &c. were to make Entries of all and every their "church booke, notes, and remembraunce," as well theretofore written, by virtue of the "saide good, laudable ordre," as thereafter to be written, under the penalty of 10s. *That* the parents of every child christened, having lands to the yearly value of 40s. or goods to the value of £5, should thenceforth pay at the christening of every child 1d.; and every person marrying a wife should pay at the marriage 1d.; and every man having lands or goods of the value aforesaid, at the burial of his wife, to pay 2d.; and every woman having lands or goods of the said value, at the burial of her husband 1d.; and every such man or woman to pay at the burial of his or their son and daughter, and his or their household servant 1d. to the churchwardens of the parish, to be paid at the end of every year to the said Registers, in consideration that they should at their "great cost and chardge" within six years register, as well all the "former church books, titles, notes, and remembraunce of 24 yeeres continuance alredy passed or thereabouts," as also the said church books, &c. yearly thereafter to be registered, as well of all and every persons having, or not having, any lands or goods of the value aforesaid, into "great, deacent books of parchment," and towards their yearly "travell and chardge" in gathering up the same church books into every one of his or their said office. *That* every person requesting search to be made in the said books, should pay the sum of 4d.; for every certificate written on parchment, under the seal of the office, 12d.; and for every seal of office put to any such certificate or record 4d.

In 1590, another plan was set on foot for a general Registry, and is thus recorded in *Strype's Annals*, vol. iv. p. 45.

"An office to be deputed—In a suit to be a general Register of all the christenings, marriages, and burials, within her Majesty's realm of England and Wales, with the reasons for the same. — To the Lord Treasurer Burghley.

"The benefit that will grow to her Majesty and her successors thereby. 1. An annual rent of an £100 by year to her Majesty and her Successors for ever. 2. That it will be much profit to her Majesty, for the explaining of the ages of her wards, being now greatly abused by Escheaters and Feodaries, in the benefits and commodities which may thereby grow to her subjects. 3. That it shall tend to the great good of many, which shall have occasion to have certificates, either for lawful copplement in matrimony, or in case of bastardy. 4. That it shall clearly avoid all cozenages made by those under age, either in levying of fines, suffering recoveries, acknowledging statutes or recognizances, or doing any other matter of record. 5. That the entrance of the baptisms, as it shall be provided for, will be a clear deciphering of all half bloods, or controversies daily happening under color of half or whole blood. 6. That it will be a curb for those who pretend to be sundry times married. 7. That it shall much tend to the deciding of many controversies, which daily grow, by reason of the life or death of persons. 8. There shall be also yearly delivered unto your honour, and unto every lord treasurer, for the time being, a summary of the whole. Whereby it shall appear unto you and them, how many christenings, weddings, and burials, be every year within England and Wales, and every County particularly by itself, and how many men-children and women-children in either of them, severally set down by themselves."

A patent for this was sent from the Lord Treasurer to the Archbishop of Canterbury, for his judgment, but nothing of importance appears to have been settled until the

39th of Elizabeth's reign, 25th Oct. 1597, when the following Constitution was made by the Archbishop, Bishops, and Clergy of the province of Canterbury, and approved by the Queen, under the Great Seal of Great Britain, and which, it will be seen, notices the exceeding great utility (*permagnus usus*) of Parochial Registers, and lays down very minute directions for their proper preservation; and in addition to this, it appears by entries made in several Parish Registers, that persons were appointed for the purpose of examining these records, and ascertaining if the particulars of the several orders had been complied with; and if not, of fining the parochial officers for the neglect.

*De Registriis in Ecclesiis saluæ custodiæ committendis.*

“ Et quia Registra in Ecclesiis (quorum permagnus usus est) fideliter volumus custodiri: Primum Statuendum putamus ut in singulis Visitationibus admonentur ministri, et economi ecclesiarum de Injunctionibus regiis ea in re diligentius observandis.

“ Deinde ut libri ad hunc usum destinati, quotutius reservari et ad posteritatis memoriam propagari possint, ex pergamen sumptibus parochianorum in posterum conficiantur: Iisque non modo ex veteribus libris cartaceis transumpta nomina eorum qui regnante Serenissima Domina nostra, Elizabetha, aut baptismatis aqua abluti, aut matrimoniis copulati, aut ecclesiasticæ sepulturæ beneficio affecti sint, suo ordine sumptibus parochianorum inscribantur sed eorum etiam qui in posterum baptizati, vel matrimonio conjuncti, vel sepulti fuerint.

“ Ac ne quid vel dolo commissum vel omissum negligentur redarguatur, quæ per singulas hebdomadas in hisce libris inscripta nomina fuerint ea singulis diebus Dominicis post preces matutinas aut vespertinas finitas, aperte ac distincte per ministrum legantur, die ac mense quibus singula gestæ sunt sigillatim adjectis.

“ Postquam autem paginam aliquam integram multorum nominum inscriptio compleverit, tum ministri,



tum gardianorum ipsius parochæi subscriptionib' volumus eam communiri.

" Idemque in transumptis ex veteribus libris cartaceis, paginis singulis fieri, sed diligenti, ac fideli prius habita collatione: neque vero in unius cujusquam custodia librum illum, sed in cista publica, eaque trifariam obserata reservandum putamus, ita ut neque sine ministro gardiani nec sive utrisque gardianis minister quicquam possit innovare.

" Postremum est ut exemplar quotannis cujusque anni auctæ nominum inscriptionis ad Episcopi Diocesani registrum per gardianos infra mensem post Festum Paschatis transmittatur, et sine feodo ullo recipiatur, atque in Archivis Episcopi fideliter custodiatur.

" Quocunque vero in premissis eorum ve aliquo deliquerit, is ut delecti qualitas jusque postulaverit puniatur."<sup>(1)</sup>

And by another of Elizabeth's Injunctions, every minister at institution, was amongst other things, to subscribe to this protestation, " I shall keep the Register Book according to the Queen's Majesty's Injunctions."

In the first year of the next reign, that of James the First, Anno 1603, another Ecclesiastical Mandate provided that " In omni hujus Regni," &c. but the English may be found on record as follows: (<sup>1</sup>)

" In every parish church and chapel within this realm shall be provided one parchment book at the charge of the parish, wherein shall be written the day and year of every christning, wedding, and burial, which have been in that parish since the time that the law was first made in that behalf, so far as the ancient books thereof can be procured, but especially since the beginning of the reign of the late Queen. And for the safe keeping of the said book, the churchwardens, at the charge of the parish,

(1) Sparrow, p. 257.

(2) Gibson's Codes, vol. i, p. 229.

shall provide one sure coffer with three locks and keys, whereof the one to remain with the minister, and the other two with the churchwardens severally, so that neither the minister without the two churchwardens, nor the churchwardens without the minister, shall at any time take that book out of the said coffer. And henceforth upon every Sabbath day, immediately after morning or evening prayer, the minister and churchwardens shall take the said parchment book out of the said coffer, and the minister, in the presence of the churchwardens, shall write and record in the said book the names of all persons christened, together with the names and surnames of their parents, and also the names of all persons married and buried in that parish in the week before, and the day and year of every such christning, marriage, and burial; and that done, they shall lay up that book in the coffer as before. And the minister and churchwardens, unto every page of that book, when it shall be filled with such inscriptions, shall subscribe their names. And the churchwardens shall once every year, within one month after the five and twentieth day of March, transmit unto the Bishop of the diocese, or his Chancellor, a true copy of the names of all persons christned, married or buried in their parish, in the year before (ended the said five and twentieth day of March), and the certain days and months in which every such christning, marriage, and burial was had, to be subscribed with the hands of the said minister and churchwardens, to the end the same may faithfully be preserved in the Registry of the said Bishop, which certificate shall be received without fee. And if the minister or churchwardens shall be negligent in performance of any thing herein contained, it shall be lawful for the Bishop, or his Chancellor, to convent them, and proceed against every of them as contemners of this our Constitution."

During the confusions which existed in the reign of Charles the First, Parish Registers were greatly neglected,

but, by the Journals of the House of Commons, in 1644, it appears, that the legislature were not unaware of their importance, for we find the subject noticed thus:—

“ Anno 1644, 6 Dec: Ordered, that it be referred to the Committee for bringing in the ordinance for the establishing the Directory, to bring in a clause in that ordinance for registering the time of baptizing of children, and their parents' names, and for registering of burials.”—*Journals of the House of Com.* vol. iii. p. 715.

And in the same year an ordinance was made, that the Book of Common Prayer should not be thenceforth used, but “ The Directory of Public Worship.” And it was further ordained, “ by the authority aforesaid, that there shall be provided, at the charge of every parish or chapelry in this realm of England and dominion of Wales, a fair Register Book of velim, to be kept by the minister, and other officers of the church, and that the names of all children baptized, and of their parents, and of the time of their birth and baptizing, shall be written and set down by the minister therein, and also the names of all persons married there, and the time of their marriage; and also the names of all persons buried in that parish, and the time of their death and burial; and that the said book shall be shewed by such as keep the same, to all persons reasonably desiring to search for the birth, baptizing, marriage, or burial of any person therein registered, and to take a copy, or procure a certificate thereof.” In the same ordinance, after setting forth the forms of prayer to be used at marriages, it is added, “ A Register is to be carefully kept, wherein the names of the parties so married, with the time of their marriage, are forthwith to be fairly recorded in a book, provided for that purpose, for the perusal of all whom it may concern.”

When the political affairs of the Country became a little more settled, under the administration of the Pro-

tector, the Parliament, about the year 1653, directed Registrars to be chosen by every parish, to be approved of and sworn by a Justice of the Peace, for the registering births and burials. The following is an entry in the Parish Register of Shudy Camps, in Cambridgeshire, of the due appointment of one of these Registrars :—

“ Cambsh.—(These are to certifie all whom it may concern y<sup>e</sup> Jn<sup>o</sup> Wignald Clerke (being elected Register of y<sup>e</sup> Parish of Shudy Camps by y<sup>e</sup> Inhabit<sup>rs</sup>. of y<sup>e</sup> same Parish as hath appear’d unto me by a Certificate under y<sup>e</sup> hands of y<sup>e</sup> Inhabitants thereof) did come before me Tho. Benett Esq<sup>r</sup>. one of y<sup>e</sup> Justices for y<sup>e</sup> peace of y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup> Countie and did take his oath for y<sup>e</sup> due Execution of his Office acc<sup>o</sup> to y<sup>e</sup> late Act of Parliam<sup>t</sup> in y<sup>e</sup> case made and provided. Which s<sup>d</sup> John Wignald I do hereby constitute Register thereof. Accordingly witness my hand and seal this

10 of Jan. 1653

Tho. Benett.”

As, however, several alterations in the practice of Registry took place, in consequence of this Act, such as the entries of *births*, not *baptisms*, &c. it may elucidate the contents of Parish Registers about that period, if the Act is recited.

It was passed on the 24th August, 1653, (1) and enacts, “ That whosoever should agree to be married within the Commonwealth of England, after the 29th Sept. 1653, should (21 days before such intended marriage) deliver in writing unto the Register (therinafter appointed) for the respective parish, where each party to be married lived, the names, surnames, additions, and places of abode of the parties so to be married, and of their parents, guardians, or overseers, all which, said Register should publish three Lord’s Days then next following, at the close of the morning

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(1) Scobell’s Acts of Parliament.

exercise, in 'the public meeting-place, commonly called the church or chapel, or (if the parties desired it) in the market-place next to the said church or chapel, on three market-days, in three several weeks next following, between the hours of 11 and 2; which done, the Registrar should make a certificate thereof, without which the persons thereafter authorized, should not proceed in such marriage. That such persons intending to be married, should come before some Justice of the Peace of the same county, city, or town, with such certificate, and if no impediment, the marriage was to proceed thus:—

“The man to be married, taking the woman to be married by the hand, shall plainly and distinctly pronounce these words:—

“I, A. B. do here in the presence of God the searcher of all hearts, take thee C. D. for my wedded Wife, and do also in the presence of God and before these witnesses, promise to be unto thee a loving and faithful Husband.”

“And then the woman, taking the man by the hand, shall plainly and distinctly pronounce these words:—

“I, C. D. do here, in the presence of God, the searcher of all hearts, take thee A. B. for my wedded Husband, and do also in the presence of God and before these witnesses, promise to be unto thee a loving, faithful, and obedient Wife.”

“Whereupon the said Justice was to declare them man and wife, and no other marriage was to be valid within the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, the Justice, in case of dumb persons, might dispense with pronouncing the words afore-said; and with joining hands, in case of persons having no hands.

“And that a true and just account may be always kept, as well of publications as of all such marriages, and also of the births of children, and deaths of all sorts of



persons within this Commonwealth, Be it further enacted, that a book of good vellum, or parchment, shall be provided by every parish for the registering of all such marriages, and of all births of children and burials of all sorts of persons within every parish, for the safe keeping of which book the inhabitants and householders of every parish, chargeable to the relief of the poor or the greater part of them present, shall, on or before the 22d day of Sept. 1653, make choice of some able and honest person (such as shall be sworn and approved by one Justice of the Peace in that parish, division, or countie, and so signified under his hand in the said Register Book), to have the keeping of the said book, who shall therein fairly enter in writing all such publications, marriages, births of children and burials of all sorts of persons, and the names of every of them, and the days of the month and years of publications, marriages, births, and burials, and the parents, guardians, or overseers' names: and the Register in such parish shall attend the said Justice of Peace to subscribe the entry of every such marriage; and the person so elected, appointed, and sworn, shall be called the *Parish Register*, and shall continue three years in the said place of Register, and longer, until some other be chosen, unless such Justice of the Peace, or the said parish, with consent of such Justice, shall think fit to remove him sooner—and for such publications and certificate thereof, 12*d.* and no more, may be taken; and for the entry of every marriage, 12*d.* and no more; and for every birth of childe, 4*d.* and no more; and for every death, 4*d.* and no more; and for publications, marriages, births, or burials of poor people, who live upon alms, nothing shall be taken. And the said Justices of Peace (if it be desired) shall give unto the parties so married a certificate in parchment, under his hand and seal, of such marriage, and of the day of the solemnization thereof, and of two or more of the witnesses then present, and the Justice's clerk for this certificate, may receive 12*d.* and no more. And if such certificate shall be

produced to the Clerk of the Peace for that county, and request made to him to make an entry thereof, then the said Clerk of the Peace is hereby required to enter the same in a book of parchment, to be provided for that purpose, and kept amongst the Records of the said Sessions, and to return the said certificate; for which entry the Clerk of the Peace may receive 4*d.* and no more." "And be it enacted, that all Register Books for marriages, births, and burials, already past, shall be delivered into the hands of the respective Registers, appointed by this Act, to be kept as Records."

This Act was confirmed in 1656, except so much as declares "no other marriage to be valid," &c.

This regulation was not in force many years; and at the Restoration, the business devolved to the parochial Clergy again, and has continued a part of their duty ever since.

In Charles the Second's reign, an Act, (30 Car. II. cap. 3), was passed, intituled "An Act for burying in Woollen," and was intended "for the lessening the importation of linen from beyond the seas, and the encouragement of the woollen and paper manufactures of this Kingdom"—

Sec. 4. "And it is enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all persons in Holy Orders, Deans, Parsons, Deacons, Vicars, Curates, and their, or any of their Substitutes, do, within their respective parishes, precincts, and places, take an exact account, and keep a Register<sup>(1)</sup> of all and every person or persons buried in his or their respective parishes or precincts, or in such common burial places, as their respective parishioners are usually buried."

But no penalty was to be incurred by reason of any persons

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(1) Parish Registers frequently contain lists of the affidavits brought, in pursuance of this act, to the Clergyman on the burial of individuals, of their being shrouded in woollen; these will often afford information, not to be found in the Registers themselves.

Nothing appears to have been done with respect to the Parish Registers in the reign of James the Second; but in that of William the Third, several Acts were passed, and although the motive does not appear to have been so much the desire to enforce the Registry of births, &c. purely on account of its usefulness, but rather as an assistance to the collectors in getting in the duties imposed upon births, marriages, and burials, yet there can be no doubt that they were the means of effecting greater punctuality on the part of the Clergy in making the entries, as they gave the collectors free access to the Parish Registers, and awarded a penalty of £100 on the persons neglecting to make the entries.

The first Act alluded to is the 6th and 7th William the Third, cap. 6, intituled, "An Act for granting to his Majesty certain Rates and Duties upon Marriages, Births, and Burials, and upon Bachelors and Widowers, for the term of five years, for carrying on the War against France with vigour."

	£.	s.	d.
For the Burial of every person .....	0	4	0
"    of a Duke (above the 4 <sup>th</sup> ) .....	50	0	0
"    of a Marquess, &c. &c. in proportion.			
"    of every person having a real estate of £50 per annum or upwards, or a personal estate of £600, or upwards .....	0	20	0
"    of the Wife of such person having such estate ....	0	10	0
For and upon the birth of every person and child, except the children of those who receive alms .....	0	2	0
"    of the eldest son of a Duke .....	30	0	0
"    of a Marquess, and so forth.			
Upon the marriage of every person .....	0	2	6
"    of a Duke .....	50	0	0
"    Marquess .....	40	0	0
"    Earl .....	30	0	0
and so forth.			
Bachelors, above 25 years old, yearly .....	0	1	8
Widowers do .....	0	1	0
A Duke being Bachelor or Widower, yearly .....	12	10	0
A Marquess " do .....	10	0	0

And the 24th sect. enacts, " That all persons in Holy Orders, deans, parsons, deacons, vicars, curates, and their or any of their substitutes, do, within their respective parishes, precincts, and places, take an exact and true account, and keep a Register in writing of all and every person or persons, married, buried, christened, or born in his or their respective parishes, or precincts, or in such common burying-places, as their respective parishioners are usually buried in, to which Book or Register, the collectors for the respective parishes and places, and all other persons concerned, shall have free access to view the same at all seasonable times, without any fee or reward," under a penalty, against such persons neglecting or refusing to make such entries, of £100.

The 7th and 8th William the Third, cap. 65, enacts, that " divers Ministers being in prison for debt and otherwise, do marry in the said prisons many persons resorting thither for the purposes aforesaid, and in other places for lucre and gain to themselves," and that " divers children who are born within this kingdom are not christened according to the usages and ceremonies of the Church of England, and many are christened in private houses, nor are the parents of such children obliged by the aforesaid Act (6th and 7th William) to give notice to their respective ministers of the births of such children, for want whereof an exact Register of all persons born is not kept, and many persons chargeable with the duties in the said Act mentioned, do thereby escape the payment of the several sums due to His Majesty, and charged upon them by the said Act, by reason of the birth of such children." It then enacts, that the parents of every child thereafter to be born, shall, within five days after the birth give notice to the Vicar &c. of the Parish, of the day of the birth of such child, under a penalty of 40s.; which Vicar &c. were under a like penalty to take an exact and true account of, and keep a distinct Register of such so born, and not christened, for doing which the parents were to pay to the Vicar 6d.

The 4th Anne, cap. 12, sec. 10, recites, that many of the clergy not being sufficiently apprized of the full import of the 6th and 7th of Wm. III. (which inflicts a penalty of £100 for every neglect in making the Entries therein directed) had incurred the penalties thereof, whereby they and their families remained exposed to ruin. The Act therefore directs, that they should be indemnified from the consequences of such omissions, provided the duty for every marriage, birth, or burial should be really answered and paid, or notified, and brought in charge to the collector of the duties.

The 26th Geo. II. cap. 33, (intituled an Act to prevent Clandestine Marriages), directs the churchwardens of every parish to provide proper books of vellum, or good and durable paper, in which all marriages and banns of marriage respectively should be registered, "and all books provided as aforesaid, shall be deemed to belong to every such parish or chapelry respectively, and shall be carefully kept and preserved for public use." And that immediately after the celebration of every marriage an entry thereof should be made in the form there set forth, and which is nearly the same as that now in use. And by this Act, persons convicted of making a false entry, or altering any entry, or assisting therein, or publishing as true any such false entry, or destroying any Register of Marriage, &c. were to be deemed guilty of felony without benefit of clergy.

In consequence of this last Act requiring that a marriage, to be valid, should be solemnized in a church or chapel, where banns had been *theretofore* usually published, the Court of King's Bench, in 1781, annulled a marriage made in a chapel erected or consecrated in 1765. An Act therefore passed, directing that all marriages solemnized before the first of August 1781, in any church or public chapel, erected and consecrated since the 26th Geo. II. should be valid, and that the Registers thereof should be received as evidence in all Courts. And that the Registers



of all marriages solemnized in any such chapels should, within twenty days, be removed to the parish church of the parish in which such chapel should be situate, to be kept with the Marriage Register of such parish. In 1804 an Act passed, making valid all marriages in chapels erected since the 26th Geo. II. and solemnized before the 25th of March, 1805.

The 23d Geo. III. enacted, That after the first day of October, 1783, the following duty should be paid to His Majesty, upon the entry of every burial, marriage, birth, or christening, in the Register of every parish, precinct, or place in Great Britain; a stamp duty of 3*d.* under a penalty of £5 for every entry. And that every parson, vicar, curate, or other person, having authority to make the entry of burials, marriages, births, or christenings, was thereby vested with full power and authority, previous to the making thereof in the Register, to demand and receive from the undertaker, or other person employed in and about the funeral of any person so to be buried, or from the parties married, or from the parent of the child whose birth or christening was registered, or other person requiring the christening of such child, the sum of 3*d.*; and upon refusal to pay the said duty or demand, to forfeit £5. And that the churchwardens should provide one or more book or books, with such stamps for each entry to be made therein; and the parson, vicar, curate, or other person receiving the duty was to be allowed 2*s.* in the pound for their trouble.—This Act was repealed in 1794, for it met with many objections. The rich and poor were thereby taxed alike; the poor refused to pay, and the Clergyman was placed in the disagreeable situation of a tax-gatherer, with a remuneration for the trouble of collection, and often preferred paying the tax out of his own purse, than incur the ill-will of his parishioners. In Scotland (as will presently be shewn) it was the means in many parishes of the omission of Registration altogether.

In the year 1812, the last Act of Parliament was

passed, commonly called Sir George Rose's Act.—It is the 52d Geo. III. cap. 146, and is intituled “ An Act for the better regulating and preserving Parish and other Registers of *Births*, Baptisms, Marriages and Burials in England.” After reciting, that the amending the manner and form of keeping, and of preserving Registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials of His Majesty's subjects in England, would greatly facilitate the proof of pedigrees of persons claiming to be entitled to real or personal estates, and be otherwise of great public benefit and advantage: It enacts, that after the 31st of December, 1812, Registers of public and private baptisms, marriages, and burials, solemnized according to the rites of the United Church of England and Ireland, within all parishes or chapelries in England, shall be made and kept by the rector, vicar, curate, or officiating minister, in books of parchment or paper (to be provided by the King's Printer, at the expence of the respective parishes), according to the forms contained in Schedules annexed to the Act.—*That* Registers of baptisms, &c. be kept in separate books, and be of paper, unless the churchwardens should require them of parchment.—*That* after the solemnization of baptism or burial, the rector &c. shall, as soon as possible, enter in a fair and legible hand-writing, in the proper Register Book, the several particulars described in the Schedules, and sign the same; and in no case, (unless prevented by sickness, or other unavoidable impediment) later than within seven days after the ceremony of any such baptism or burial shall have taken place.—*That* the Register Books shall be kept in a dry, well-painted iron chest, in some dry, safe, and secure place, within the usual residence of such rector, &c. (if resident within the parish), or in the parish church.—*That* within two months after the end of every year, fair copies of all the entries of the preceding year, shall be made by the rector &c. on *parchment*, to be verified and signed by the rector &c.—*That* such copies shall be sent, before the 1st of June in each year, to the Registrar

of the diocese, which Registrar shall, before the 1st of July in every year, report to the Bishop whether such copies have been sent, and on failure of transmission of such copies, to report the same specially to the Bishop.---*That* the Registrars shall cause such copies to be securely deposited and preserved from damage, by fire or otherwise, and to be *carefully arranged*; and cause *correct alphabetical Lists* to be made of all persons and places mentioned in such copies for the public use.---*That* the Bishop, together with the Custodes Rotulorum of the several counties within each diocese, and the Chancellor thereof, shall, before the 1st of February, 1813, cause a careful survey to be made of the several places in which the parochial Registers are kept, and report to the Privy Council, before the 1st of March following, whether such buildings are safe and proper, and at what expence they may be made so; with their opinion upon the most suitable mode of remunerating the officers employed in each Registry, for their additional trouble and expence, in carrying the provisions of the Act into execution.---*That* persons making any false entry in any Register, or altering, defacing, or injuring any such Register Book, Transcript, or List, shall be liable to transportation for fourteen years. *That* the rector of every parish shall, before the 1st of June, 1813, transmit to the Registrar of the diocese a List of all Registers, which were then in the parish, stating the periods at which they respectively commence and terminate, the periods (if any) for which they are deficient, and the places where they are deposited.---The Schedules annexed to the Act contain the following particulars:---

#### BAPTISMS.

When baptized. Child's Christian name. Parents' Christian and Surname. Abode. Quality. Trade or Profession. By whom the Ceremony was performed.

#### MARRIAGES.

Name and Parish of Man. Ditto of Woman. Where

married. Whether by Banns or Licence. Whether with consent of Parents or Guardians. When. By whom. Signature of Minister, of the parties married, and of two witnesses.

#### BURIALS.

Name. Abode. When buried. Age. By whom the Ceremony was performed.

In the year 1824, a Bill was brought into the House, and read a first time, intituled " A Bill to authorize the Establishment of a Metropolitan Register Office, for concentrating and preserving the Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials in England." After reciting the 52d Geo. III. and that the provisions contained therein, had not been fully complied with, and that the same remained inoperative, inasmuch as the Returns to the Bishop's Registry were not regularly made, and that there was no penalty for the neglect, whereby the intention of the said Act was rendered abortive. And reciting, that in consequence of such neglect, the Bishop's Registrar had been deprived of the means of ascertaining, whether the Wills of persons dying testate, or the personal estates of Intestates had been proved or administered, and that numerous persons evaded such proof or administration, and the payment of the duties attached thereto, and the protection intended to be afforded to the creditors of deceased persons was defeated. And reciting, that the collecting the Registers in the provincial Registries had not afforded that facility in the tracing of pedigrees contemplated by the provisions of the Act of the 52d Geo. III.; and that several persons had been prevented prosecuting their claims with effect, to Estates to which they are intitled, from the difficulty and expence of procuring Registers, and that facility would be afforded and expence saved, if the Registers of baptisms, marriages, and burials in England, were concentrated in one General Office in London or Westminster. It was therefore proposed, that certain persons should be ap-



pointed Registrars, who should establish an Office, to be called "The Metropolitan Register Office," for concentrating and preserving the Registers of public and private Baptisms, Marriages and Burials in England, from the

to the both inclusive, and for continuing and maintaining the same. That copies of the whole Register should be made by each parish, (the expence to be paid out of the Church Rate of the respective parishes), and afterwards, from year to year, a true copy of the Register for the preceding year should be made, and sent to the Metropolitan Office. And in case of neglect by the clergyman (without sufficient excuse) he should be disqualified for performing duty, for any period not exceeding months, at the discretion of the ordinary of the diocese, and in case of neglect by the churchwardens, they should forfeit the sum of £ , and the sum of

for every week such neglect continued. That when such Registers as aforesaid, should be so received at the Metropolitan Office, the Registrars should cause the same to be carefully arranged, for the purpose of being resorted to, and should cause correct alphabetical Lists to be made, and kept in books suitable to the purpose, of the names of all persons mentioned in such Registers. That office copies of Registers might be made by the Metropolitan Registrars, to be received as evidence in Courts of Law and Equity. That the Registrars should annually supply His Majesty's Legacy Stamp Office with the christian and surnames of all persons of twenty-one years and upwards buried during the previous year, with their titles, professions, or trades, and when and where buried.(1)

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(1) Nothing was done with this Bill beyond the first reading.



## CHAPTER III.

OF THE STATE OF PRESERVATION OF PARISH  
REGISTERS.

THE custody of the Parish Register having been frequently committed to ignorant parish clerks, who had no idea of their utility beyond their being occasionally the means of putting a shilling into their pockets for furnishing Extracts, and at other times being under the superintendence of an incumbent, either forgetful, careless, or negligent, the result has necessarily been, that some of the Registers are miserably defective, some having the appearance of being kept regularly from month to month, and year to year, yet being deficient of a great many entries; others, having a break of several years together, while a third class are written with a carelessness, amounting to little better than a total neglect of Registry; besides which, the appointment of lay Registrars in the time of the Commonwealth, and the Order that the previous Register Books should be handed over to them, caused much confusion, and perhaps the loss of some of them, as the business did not remain in their hands but a few years, and it has ever since continued a part of the duty of the Parochial Clergy.

A few specimens of the defective Registers above mentioned will now be given :—

*North Stoneham, Hants*, the Register of Burials begins in 1640, but that of Baptisms not until 1674.

*Shenly* begins 1636, and ends 1649; the next book begins 1653, but no regular Register before 1703.

*Newton Blossomville* begins in 1691, the old Register being lost.

*Cottenham*, in Cambridgeshire. The Register burnt in a fire, which consumed two-thirds of the town, in 1676.

*Great Brickhill*. Imperfect from 1639 to 1666.

*Milton*, in Cambridgeshire. Several leaves cut out of this Register, in different parts of it.

*Bradwell*. Imperfect from 1639 to 1666.

*Frampton Cotterell*, in Gloucestershire. No Entries whatever made from 1639 to 1653.

*Dursley*, in Gloucestershire. The first Register beginning in 1556 has been destroyed, the earliest entry now is in 1640.

*Torporley*, in Cheshire. In this Register is a break from 1643 to 1648, upon which is the following remark :—

“ This Intermission hapned by reason of the great wars obliterating Memorials, wasting fortunes, and slaughtering persons of all sorts.”

*Bittenwell*, in Leicestershire, begins 1558, but there is a chasm in Baptisms from 1642 to 1651, there being but nine during that time ; and they are not entered at all from 1655 to 1659. There is the following memorandum in the Register Book of this parish :—

“ 1660, These following are recorded by Geo. Castell soe soon as this Booke came into his Hands—the omission of foregoing years was occasioned partly by the neglect of his predecessor, and partly by an ordinance of Parliament for a towne Register not observed by this Parish.”

The Biblio<sup>a</sup> Topo<sup>a</sup> Britt<sup>a</sup> mentions the clerk of Plungar, in Leicestershire, to have been a grocer, and that he had no idea of the use of a Parish Register, beyond that of its affording waste paper for wrapping up his grocery commodities ; and Mr. Cole, in his MSS. mentions a book intituled “ *Registrum Causarum Consistorii Eliensis de Tempore Domini Thome de Arundele Episcopi Eliensis,*” a large quarto, written on vellum, containing 162 double

pages, which was purchased as waste paper at a grocer's shop in Cambridge, together with forty or fifty old books belonging to the Registry of Ely.

Thoresby, in his History of Leicestershire, says, "at one place I was told by the clerk, when I observed that the Register must be deficient, that Farmer —— kept the Register lately, and he, to save the tax, *put no name* down for two years."

And with reference to the Register of Scraploft, the same author says, "I saw the best preserved, and, I believe, the oldest Register in the county. It has not been a plaything for young pointers—it has not occupied a bacon-crotch, or a bread and cheese-cupboard—it has not been scribbled on within and without; but it has been *treasured* ever since 1638, to the honour of a succession of worthy clergymen."

The Gentleman's Magazine for 1811, upon this subject remarks, that "the clergyman (in many country places) has entered the names at his leisure, whenever he had nothing better to do, and perhaps has never entered them at all; misnomers, which for the individual may have had the most serious consequences, have occurred in every page; and the Registers have often been lent about the parish to any friends of the incumbent or the churchwardens, who, from curiosity or worse motives, have been induced to borrow them."

The narrative of the restoration of the Huntingdon peerage, mentions the circumstance of the early Registers of the parish of—— in Hampshire, having been destroyed by the late Curate's wife, who had made kettle-holders of them, and would, perhaps, have consumed the whole parish archives in this homely way, but that the parish clerk, by a timely interference, had rescued the remainder. Other mutilations of parish Registers are also mentioned in this narrative.

Bigland, in his observations on Parish Registers, mentions his having occasion to consult a Register, and was

directed to the cottage of a poor labouring man, as clerk of the parish; he not being at home, Mr. B. informed the children of his desire, upon which they pulled out the drawer of an old table, where among much rubbish of rusty iron &c. he found the Register. In another parish the clerk was a tailor, and had cut out more than sixteen leaves of the old Register, in order to supply himself with measures.

Dr. Burnaby, upon one occasion asking to see the Register of a parish, was told that they had but the one produced; that they had had another some time ago, but that it was very old *and quite out of date*, of no manner of use, for none of the neighbours could read it; and that it had therefore been tossed about in the church, till either some workmen or children had carried it away, or torn it in pieces.

In Northamptonshire, a clergyman discovered at the house of one of his parishioners an old parchment Register, sewed together as a covering for the tester of a bedstead; and in another parish, the Register being in the custody of a parish clerk, his daughters, who were lace makers, were allowed to cut it up for a supply of parchment to be used in their manufacture.

The Population Abstract of 1801, contains the names of some hundreds of parishes whose Registers are deficient, and also states the particular periods at which the defects occur, and whether in the entries of baptisms, marriages, or burials: although the returns from which this Abstract was compiled, only comprised the period from 1700 and 1800, there are many Registers defective, for spaces of fifty, sixty, and even upwards of eighty years!!

By the returns made respecting the state of several parish churches in 1610, it appears that some were wholly without Register books. That relating to Birtley, in Northumberland, notices its wants thus:—

“Offic Dni con<sup>o</sup> Gardianos. They want a surpluss  
....and a Register Book in parchment.”

17 Dec. 1610, *Cur, Consist*, No. 4, p. 136.

In the Register book of Bottesford, in Leicestershire, is an entry, which would tend to shew that the neglect of Registry had been inquired into and punished; it is to the following effect:—

“ The 10th day of June in the yere of our Lord 1575, by virtue of a Commission directed from the Queen’s Majesty, we were commanded to appear at Leic’ Robert Gibson Clarke, William Fowler Gard’. Henry Challande, Henry Vincent, and John Sumnier, Junr. and there we shewed our Register Book, and wanted 23 yeres, and for the same did compound with one William Evanse Clarke, and Brother in Lawe unto Mr. George Fletcher, the head Commissioner, and gave in money 3s. the day and yere above wrytten.”

In 1598, also, upon the ordering of transcripts to be made, it appears the non-compliance was visited by a fine, for in the churchwardens’ accounts of Clerkenwell, is the following payment:—

“ Paid unto Mr. Dr. Stanhope, for that our Regester Booke was not engrossed on parchment, 2s. 8d.”

Of the third class of defective Registers is that of Feltham, in Middlesex, where is the following Register of marriage, which was extracted by the author in order to prove the title of a person to some property, of which he had the distribution:—

— of — parish — and — of — parish — were married in this — by — this first day of December, in the year 1770, by me

This Marriage was solemnized between us

	×	
	her	
Elizabeth	×	West
	Mark.	

in the presence of

Samuel Mercer

Sarah × Cromwell,



Notwithstanding the ridiculous appearance of this entry of marriage, for it cannot be called a certificate, and notwithstanding both the witnesses were dead, the parties were particularly fortunate; for a great many of the antecedent entries of marriages were not even so explicit as the specimen just given, inasmuch, as although the contracting parties certainly made their marks, yet the clergyman had not written *either* of their names against those marks, so that, as it would be an utter impossibility to throw any light on the subject by the marks, it would be equally impossible by any thing on the face of the entry to prove *whose* marriage was solemnized. In the same book is the following entry: "No Register was kept from this time," (27th November 1753) "till June 30th, 1771," a period of 18 years!!

The Register Book of the Chapel of Somerset House, containing, among other Entries, some of the Bouverie Family, was, a short time since, in an Auction Catalogue of Sale by Mr. Christie; and many others are known to be in private hands.

By the return made in 1801, (in compliance with the Population Act) for the Parish of Ragdale, in Leicestershire, it appears that the Register of that Parish, prior to 1784, was in the possession of Earl Ferrers, and that "his Lordship desired the Rev. Wm. Casson, the Curate, to say, that it was mislaid. A part of the Register of Nuthurst is in the British Museum.—*Ayc. Catal.* p. 70. No. 1677. Also the Register of Stevington, Berks, 1553 to 1559. *Harl. MSS.* No. 9523.

That also of St. Mary Magdalen, Milk Street, London, was supposed to have been lost in the great fire of London; but it was, lately found by the clerk of St. Lawrence, Jewry, in an old chest in St. Lawrence Church; it was found to commence in 1559, and to continue till 1666, the time of the fire, when St. Mary's and St. Lawrence's were both burnt down. Guildhall Chapel, (which stood close at hand,) escaped, and the several ceremonies of baptism

&c. of the parishioners of St. Lawrence and St. Mary Magdalen, were performed there until 1678, when St. Lawrence Church being rebuilt, the parish of St. Mary Magdalen was united to it. The Registers of St. Lawrence, Jewry, commence in 1538, and in the church coffer is contained, not only a very neat transcript on parchment, as directed by the canon of Queen Elizabeth, but also the original paper-book, from which it was copied.

During the progress of the fire of London, the church-plate and books were removed from place to place, as the flames approached; a memorandum in the parish-books of St. Benedict, Gracechurch Street, is to the following effect:—

“ The church-plate and books were removed from place to place, as each were rendered dangerous by the approach of the dreadful element, and cost 10<sup>l</sup>. 8<sup>d</sup>. ”

By the fire of London, 83 parish-churches within the walls were consumed, of these 48 only were rebuilt, so that it was necessary to annex, in a great many instances, two parishes to one church, although the parishes were in other respects distinct, the following particulars may therefore be useful :—

BURNT AND REBUILT.	ANNEXED.	REBUILT, NOT ANNEXED.
St. Alban, Wood-street.	St. Olave, Silver-street.	All Hallows, Lombard-st.
All Hallows, Bread-street.	.. John Evangelist.	St. Bartholemew, Exchange.
All Hallows, Great.	All Hallows, Less.	.. Bennet Fink.
St. Andrew, Wardrobe.	St. Anne, Blackfriars.	.. Christopher.
.. Ann, Aldersgate.	.. John Zachary.	.. Dionis Backchurch.
.. Antholm.	.. John Baptist.	.. Dunstan East.
.. Austin's.	.. Faith's.	.. James Garlick-Hith.
Bennet, Gracechurch.	.. Leonard, Eastcheap.	.. Margaret, Lothbury.
Bennet, Paul's-wharf.	.. Peter's, Paul's Wharf.	.. Mary, Aldermanbury.
Christ Church.	.. Leonard, Foster-lane.	.. Martin, Ludgate.
St. Clement, Eastcheap.	.. Martin Orgar.	.. Michael, Crooked-lane.
.. Edmund, Lombard-st.	.. Nicholas Acon.	.. Michael, Cornhill.
.. George, Botolph-lane.	.. Botolph, Billingsgate.	.. Peter, Cornhill.
.. Lawrence, Jewry.	.. Mary Mag. Milk-street.	.. Stephen, Coleman-street.
.. Magnus.	.. Margaret, New Fish-st.	
.. Margaret Pattons.	.. Gabriel Fanchurch.	

BURNT AND REBUILT.	ANNEXED.	WITHOUT THE WALLS.
St. Mary, Atchurch.	St. Lawrence Pountney.	St. Bridget, rebuilt.
.. Mary, Aldermary.	.. Thomas Apostle.	.. Sepulchre's, repaired.
.. Mary le Bow.	{ All Hallows, Honey-lane.	
.. Mary Hill.	{ Pancras, Soper-lane.	
.. Mary Mag. Old Fish-st.	St. Andrew Hubbard.	
.. Mary Somerset.	.. Gregory by St. Paul.	
.. Mary Woolnoth.	.. Mary Mounthaw.	
.. Matthew, Friday-street.	.. Mary Woolchurch.	
.. Michael, Queenhithe.	.. Peter, Cheap.	
.. Michael Royal.	Holy Trinity.	
.. Michael, Wood-street.	St. Martin Vintry.	
.. Mildred, Bread-street.	.. Mary Staining.	
.. Mildred, Poultry.	.. Margaret Moses.	
.. Nicholas, Coleabby.	.. Mary Colechurch.	
.. Olave, Jewry.	.. Nicholas Olave.	
.. Stephen, Walbrook.	.. Martin, Ironmonger-la.	
.. Swithin.	.. Bennet Sherehog.	
.. Vedast, alias Foster.	.. Mary Bothaw.	
	.. Michael le Quern.	

### Kibworth, Leicestershire.

"Anno Domini 1641. Know all men that the reason why little or nothing is registered from this year 1641 until the year 1649, was the civil wars between King Charles and his Parliament, which put all into a confusion till then; and neither Minister nor people could quietly stay at home for one party or the other."

### Barkston, Leicestershire.

"1689, Ellen, the Daughter of Bryan and Ellen Dun, was baptized April 23."

"Lord pardon me if I am guilty of any Error in registering Ellen Dun's name."

This singular appeal was written by Mr. Huddleston, the vicar, who perhaps had neglected to make the entry for a long time after the baptism, and not until his memory failed him as to the precise time; he had registered Ellen Dun in the year 1689, and finding it wrong, had copied it out, and put it in 1690.

The same neglect must have occurred in the Register of Hawsted, where is inserted the baptism of a daughter

of *Sir Thomas Cullum, Bart.* in February, 1658, whereas he was not made a baronet till June, 1660.

Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire.

1670 " Here is a Bill of Burton Lazars of the people which was buried, and which was and married above 10 years old, for because the Clark was dead, and therefore they was not set down according as they was But they are all set down sure on nough one among another here in this place."

Rotherby, in Leicestershire. This Register has notice of the troublesome times of Charles the First. Mr. Neeham writes in it---

" 1643 Bellum! 1644 Bellum! 1645 Bellum! Interruption, Persecution! ..... Sequestration by John Mussen Yeoman and John Yates Taylor!"  
1649, 1650, 1651, 1652, 1653, 1654 Sequestration!  
Thomas Silverwood intruder."

Loughborough, in Leicestershire. This Register notices the change of religion in the times of Henry the Eighth, Mary, and Elizabeth.

" Heare is to be noted and remembered that from the 10 day of April in anno 1554 there was no Register keepte, by reason of the alteration of Religion and often chaunginge of Priests in those times and yeares, until the first yeare of the raigne of our Sovereigne Ladie the Queen's Majesty Elizabeth by the Grace of God, Queen of England, Fraunce, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, and until the yeare of God 1558."

*Great Hampden.* The Rector of this parish kept no Register from 1726 to 1750.

*Bledington,* in Gloucestershire. The only remaining Register bears date 1760.

*Simondsbury,* Dorsetshire. This Register has been

most negligently kept, except in Mr. Newburgh's time; the following chasms, for instance, occur—

Baptisms, 1642 to 1645, cut out.

„ 1646 to 1652, but five registered.

„ 1676 to 1684, scarce any registered.

Marriages, 1646 to 1652, none registered.

*St. Peter's, Dorchester.*

“ 1645, Mr. Stephen Thorington, buried Oct. 13, at which time the plague of pestilence was here; and in twelve months there died 52 persons, whose names are not inserted, the old Clerk being dead, who had the notes.” (1)

Godmanston, Dorsetshire. Some of the first leaves of the early Register have been lost, and others so much injured by damp, or by some corrosive matter, that they crumble to pieces upon the slightest touch.

Buckhorn Weston, Dorsetshire. The Register of this parish is mentioned by Mr. Hutchins, in his *History of Dorsetshire*, to have been torn to pieces, and lost some years since.

Long Critchell, Dorsetshire. In the Register of this parish, is a chasm of 40 years in the record of marriages.

*Abbotsbury*, in the same county. This Register begins in 1567, the first page of baptisms is lost; the second and third Register Books are much injured and defaced, probably by fire, the vicarage-house having been twice totally burnt.

The Registers of Chatham, in Kent, are very well preserved; but there is a memorandum about 1653, that a great many persons had neglected to register their children's

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(1) The practice of the clerk keeping notes, and the clergyman making up his Register Book therefrom once a year, is still in use, notwithstanding the third section of the last Act: in the parish of St. C——, London, the entries are often made in the waste book in pencil. An affidavit being required a few months since, of the entry of a burial in this Register, it was found to be in pencil; and after waiting two months to see it properly entered in ink, the deponent was obliged to swear to the copy from the pencilled entry. And in another parish, the clerk demands a fee for causing his memoranda to be entered in the Register Book.



births, (and which plainly appears by the Register) and a threat of information at the Quarter Sessions against such as should do so in future.

St. Margaret's, Rochester. These Registers have formerly been very negligently kept, a great confusion existing by the mixing of the several classes of entries in one book. Dr. Griffiths, the present Rector, informed the author, that in the time of his predecessor, a great many entries were omitted on account of his keeping at the church a waste-book,<sup>(1)</sup> in which he made the entries at the time of the performance of the ceremonies, and then entered (or *intended* to enter) them in the regular books at one time. This waste-book had been lying about in the Vestry, and although it afforded some information, a correct Register did not exist. Some of the baptisms in this parish are thus entered---

" June 14                      of Thomas and Elizabeth                      "  
 " July 18, John Smith, Son of Walter."

Stalbridge, Dorsetshire. In this Register is the following note, made by the rector in 1702.

" N. B. The following Names were transcribed by me, Richard Wright, Rector of Stalbridge, out of a loose paper, written, (as I suppose) by Philip Pitman, Clerk to Mr. Samuel Rich, and delivered to me by William Drew, the Sexton, June 10. 1702.

But it would occupy too great a space in this volume, to adduce a twentieth part of the numerous instances where Parish Registers are defective, either as to their

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(1) A waste book was also in use in Chatham parish, called a "Minute Book," as appears by the letters of the Minister in 1766, where he observes that "the entries are chiefly brought from the Minute Book, carefully kept in the Vestry Room, and it cannot be supposed that there should be any material variations in the case." The mischievous tendency, however, of this practice, will be noticed hereafter.

commencement, at certain political periods, during some particular incumbency, from neglect, (') fire at the church or rectory, or casualty of some sort or the other.

It is, indeed, remarkable, why it happens that there should have been so many fires at the residences of the clergy; repeated notices of the loss of Registers from this particular circumstance are to be met with.

It has been frequently asserted by writers on this subject, that the Registers, during the time of Oliver Cromwell, were very badly kept; but, on the contrary, that they were unusually well kept, where a lay Register was appointed according to the Act of Parliament, appears to be the fact; if there are deficiencies of whole books in some parishes previously to and about 1653 and 1660, it should be rather attributed to the orders, first directing the Clergy to hand over the Register Books to the Lay Registrar, and then that, at the Restoration, by which the clergy resumed the duty of making the entries, and again took possession of the books, or so many of them as they could procure, and had not been lost or destroyed during those troublesome times. In the parish of Langton, in Dorsetshire, there is a memorandum in the Register, which is added to these remarks, by which it appears that, notwithstanding the order of Cromwell was complied with, the Incumbent continued to make the entries as theretofore, so that there was a double Register.

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(1) In 1791, a married lady was buried at Ightham, in Kent, and in 1804, her daughter was also interred there. A very large property depended upon the proof of their burial, and the Register was referred to, but no entry of either the mother or daughter's interment could be found; and the parties were compelled to find the medical man who attended the family, and procure his affidavit of the fact of their deaths.

In the case of *Jesson, and Wither v. Brewer*, a cause in chancery in 1764, a gentleman had to prove the pedigree of a family of some importance, and though he was not obliged to go farther back than 1590 for a common ancestor, yet by means of erasures in some Registers, and bad writing in others, the difficulties were only surmounted by a great deal of perseverance, and a very heavy expence.

The following extracts from the Registers of Bishop Wearmouth, Folke, and Monk Wearmouth, will shew that however neglectful or indifferent some clergymen have been, others have entertained very proper ideas on the subject of Parish Registers, and not confining their views to their immediate use, or considering their own personal convenience, have evinced a desire to benefit posterity by recording events, upon which the interest and happiness of families might one day depend.

Langton, Dorsetshire.

“ Memorandum. Although by an Act of Parliament, bearing date the 29<sup>th</sup> day of Aug<sup>t</sup>, in the year 1653, a Register is to be chosen in every Parish, to set down, in a peculiar Booke, all marriages, births of children and burials, of all sorts of people, which shall happen after the 29<sup>th</sup> day of Sept<sup>r</sup>, in the year 1653; yet for the more securitie and common benefit of the Inhabitants of this Parish, we thought it fit to continue likewise the registering of the abovesaid passages in this book, according to former order, without derogation from or prejudice to the above-named act; and to set down what persons were married, and what people were buried in this Congregation, to prevent inconveniences and trouble.”

Bishop Wearmouth, Durham.

“ The second Register, beginning 1653, has been kept with uncommon exactness, by Tho<sup>s</sup> Broughton, A. M. Curate, who has written, on the first page, a commination against those who should deface or alter the entries,

“ Si quis hunc librum mutilare vel in ulla parte vel nomen aliquod delere, aut in falsum immutare audeat, pro sacrilego habeatur.”

Folke, Durham. This Register begins in 1538, and has been carefully kept without any chasm to the present time. Upon the cover is thus—

" Folke Register new written in the year 1628, in which year the church was new built, the churchwardens being

William Chaffey,  
Philip Taylor.'

Monk Wearmouth. In 1790, the Parish Registers were destroyed by fire at the residence of the minister, (except those of marriages from the 16th October, 1785, and of christenings from the 2d September, 1779, and of burials from the 3d January, 1768. The Vestry, under the sanction of the arch-deacon, sat for several successive days, published by advertisement, to receive and enter on record such authenticated copies of Registers as might be in existence, and the whole thus collected were sworn to before the magistrates at Sunderland, the 18th February, 1791.

The early Register of Barming, in Kent, is a Transcript made in pursuance of Elizabeth's Injunction. It is unlike most, if not all others, it being written upon a roll of parchment, several yards in length ('); it has a memorandum indorsed upon it by the Rev. Mark Noble, the late Rector, that it had been out of the possession of the Rector for forty years, when Mr. Noble discovered it at the Homestall in a drawer, that Mrs. Dormer said it was something she could not read, and that he claimed it and brought it away.

The Rev. S. Denne, rescued the Registers of two Parishes in Leicestershire, one from the shop of a bookseller, and the other from the corner cupboard of a working blacksmith, where it had lain perishing and unheard of more than thirty years.

St. Peter's, Isle of Thanet.---In the first leaf of one of the Registers, is the following memorandum:---

" In examining the Church Chest, 1759, I found the frag-

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(1) A similar Roll was found in the Parish Chest of Ledgers Ashby, but it appears to have been an *Original* Document from 1538, whereas that of Barming is a *Transcript*.

ment of a Register from 1540 to 1582, but in so bad a condition that it seemed equally impossible and useless to copy it. Nevertheless, to satisfy the curiosity of those who may be desirous of knowing what Families are first on record in the Parish, such Sire-names, as could be picked out of those shattered remains, are here inserted in an alphabetical list. C. Willes, 1759."

#### Allhallows Staining, London.

" Mem. That since Salter kept this Register, some faults he made which I have mended as well as I could. I shall now (God willing) see to it myself. W. Holland, Minister."

#### St. Mary, Aldermanbury.

" In the year 1625, Mr. Downing, the Curate of this Parish, his wife, three of his children, and the Parish Clerk, were victims to the plague, and the consequence was that a hundred names were entered in the Register from recollection."

East Norton, Leicestershire.---The oldest Register of this parish was taken away some years since, by one of the former Vicars, and no one now can tell where it is to be found. The present one is not of an earlier date than about 1780.

Birchington, Kent.---At the end of the marriages and burials in 1553, are the following notices of a Black Book(').

" Here endeth the first boke of the Register of Birchington. The second boke, called the Black Boke, was spoiled by an ignorant woman."

" Secundis inde liber p. una fatnod muliere erat destructa."

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(1) Quere.---If this may not have contained a List of the Protestants and Catholics, as directed by Cardinal Pole in 1555; and destroyed in the reign of Elizabeth, by some person who was registered in it, as having been reconciled and absolved pursuant to the Cardinal's Injunction.



## Stoke Rochford.

"Some old leaves of a Register, stitched together, begin 1663, the oldest began 1560, but is not forthcoming. They have been miserably kept."—*Turnor's Grantham*.

## Lowestoff.

"During the Commonwealth, and to the Restoration of Charles the 2d, no Entries were made in the Parish Register. The Rev. Jacob Rous, then Vicar, says, that on the 14th of March, 1643, himself, with many others, were carried away prisoners, by Colonel Cromwell, to Cambridge; so that for some time following there was neither Minister nor Clerk in this Town, but the inhabitants were obliged to procure one another to baptize their children, by which means, says he, there was no Register kept, only a few were by myself baptized in those intervals when I enjoyed my freedom.

Parish Register, 7th June, 1646.

Jacob Rous."

## St. Bridget's, Chester.

Burials—"1619, Jane Da: to S' Geo. Smith last Aug."

## Staplehurst, Kent.

The earliest Register of this parish is an original document, commencing the 29th of September, 1538, in excellent preservation, and containing many curious entries. The cover to it is of vellum, and appears to have been a portion of a very ancient manuscript, very neatly written. The parish has also a transcript of a part of the original Register, commencing with the year 1558, but it is by no means correct, as a great many entries are omitted.

## Peterborough.

"1573, October.—Here left (Gilbert) Bull to kepe the Book, and then began a loss of names.

"1604.—Here it seemeth that the Byll (1) of the names of

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(1) Waste Book.

suche as were baptized, married, or buried in the month of Aprill, 1604, was utterly lost, and never could be found to be sette down afterwards in the Church Register.

Ita. Testor Edward Wager,  
Vicar Petriburg."

Chapelry of Eye, in Northamptonshire.

" This Register being lost above fourty years, was found and bought by Thomas Laxton, inhabitant of this Parish, and given by him, at the request of the Reverend Mr. Jos. Sparke, to the Parish, only desiring the liberty of consulting it, whenever he, the restorer, thinks fit. July 22, 1711. J. Sparke."

Norborough, (1638)—The entries in this Register from 1665 to 1670, are imperfect, and after December 18, 1670, is the following remark :---

" The reason of this defect in the Register was, because one Mr. John Cleypoole, a factious gentleman, then living in the Parish of Northborough, caused the Register to be taken away from mee, Jo: Stoughton, then Rector; for which I was by the Ecclesiastical Court, then holden at St. Martin's, adjudged for satisfaction the summe of two pounds ten shillings. The money was paid at the charge of the Parish, by Robert Cooke, then Churchwarden.

" Sic testatur Johannes Stoughton—Rector Ibidem."

St. Mary's, Reading.—The years 1641 and 1642 are defective, and there is this note in the Register.

" In time of Warre, people made use of whom they could get, burials without minister, clark, or bell."

St. Giles, Reading.

1646. " Confused times of war occasioned some confusions in the Register."

St. Bridget's, Chester.

At the end of 1643, is the following—" Here the Register is

defective till the year 1653—Thomas Walker, register, the tymes were such."

#### Trinity Parish, Chester.

" Yere wanting from this place, for then the Clarke was put out of Towne for delinquinsy, so no more is entered till 12 March, 1645; for all this tyme the Citty was in strait Siege."

St. Olave's Chester.—The Register begins in 1617. The oldest book was lost in a Suit between Hugh Harvey and the Parishioners in the year 1666. The Register, now the oldest<sup>(1)</sup>, distinguishes the several ceremonies of baptism, &c. by the abbreviations of "bap aep. and nup."

In the Register of the Parish of Cerne Abbas, is inserted a memorandum of the appointment of a Lay Register, under which, at a subsequent period, has been written the following :—

" The above mentioned Parliament had noe colour of a Parliament, but a Convention by Oliver Cromwel when General, without the choyce of the people, Anno D'm 1653; and soe their act for a Register in every Parishes was noe act; and since made voyd by the soe called Parliament. Gul: Tulledge."

In that also of Helton in Dorsetshire, Mr. Antram has entered a memorandum in 1660, That in the time of the Civil Wars he was, by the power of the sword, violently kept out of his living from 1646 till Michaelmas 1660, when he was by Law restored; and that in that compass of time the Register had been kept very imperfect.

There is also in the same Register this memorandum

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(1) The materials for Bridge's History of Northamptonshire, were collected in 1720, when the dates of the earliest Registers of each Parish were noted; Mr. Baker, of Northampton, who is now compiling a new History of that County, mentioned to the Author a short time since, that it was surprising, upon comparison of Mr. Bridges' notes with the dates of the now existing Registers, how large a number were now not to be found, whereby in some Parishes, the Records for upwards of a century are lost.—In the Lansdown MSS. (No. 729), is a volume containing very copious Extracts from some of the missing Registers.

by Snooke, one of the intruders, which is remarkable on account of the bad hand, orthography, and sense, and shews what able Ministers those unhappy times produced.

“ 1649. At my first coming to this place, about this time, ther war som married, that livid in the parish, others buried, and especially more that had their children baptized, partly in contempt, and by reason of ignorance and wilfulness against me refusing to be examined, of the poorer sort, and whereof som ar living, others ar dead, the which if they should live, they would be made incapable of any earthly inheritance. This I note for the satisfaction of any that do,

And so I left it in the clark's liberty.

William Snoke.”

A great number of the early Register Books are in Latin ; some have the miscellaneous memoranda written in French, others in Greek, short hand, &c. &c. The practice of making the entries in Latin does not appear to have been generally disused until about the middle or latter end of the seventeenth century. The establishment of Protestantism had great weight in effecting the change, as the Bible was then directed to be read in the English tongue, and the Catholic Priests gradually gave way to the Clergy of the reformed religion, and these latter individuals, had little reason to adopt the language so much in repute in the Catholic Church. The Register of All-Saints, Derby, has the following memorandum, notwithstanding which, Entries were made in that Register for many years afterwards in Latin.

“ May 16, 1610. I see no reason why a Register for English people should be written in Latin.

Richard Kilbie, Minister of All-hallows, in Darbie.”

The most curious Register, if any is at present extant<sup>(1)</sup>, is that ordered by Cardinal Pole, in pursuance of a

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(1) The author has used great exertions to discover one of these Registers,

Bull of the Pope of Rome, for the Reconciliation of the Kingdom to the Catholic Faith, to be kept by every parish priest, of the names and surnames of all their parishioners who, on a certain day to be settled on, were to be reconciled and absolved. The Cardinal on the 29th of January 1554-5, gave deputed powers to the Bishops, together with certain Rules, to them and their Officials, in which Rules are to be met the following:—

“Eodem die constituetur Dies Festus et Solemnis in quo astante in Ecclesia populi Multitudine Domini Episcopi omnes Curati Ecclesiis suis, omnia eodem quæ Clero jam exposit’ fuerunt populo quoq; insinuabent et omnes invitabunt paterne et Cum omni affectu, ut agnitis erroribus suis ad Ecclesiæ Catholicæ gremium revertantur: promittendo fore, ut omnibus preterita Crimina omnia Condonentur et remittantur mods eos ex animo illorum peniteat et illis renuncient prefigatur autem terminus, ut pote totæ paschatis Octava, infra terminum omnes Ecclesiæ reconcilientur alioquin eo lapso contra ipsos et eos qui post, reconciliationem ad vomitum aversi fuerunt severissime procedetur, dicatur etiam de Facultate concessa a Reverendissimo Domino Legato Episcopis, et aliis ut absolvere possint, omnes quicunq, ad vos reversi fuerint.

“Idem, Domini Episcopi et Officiales nominabunt et deputabunt Ecclesiarum Parochialium Rectores seu alias personas idoneas, quæ Laicos ab Heresi Schismate et quibuscunq, Censuris absolvant juxta Facultatum Formam et tenorem. Data per Episcopos formula qua in absolutione et reconciliatione uti debeant.

“Eadem poterint cum clero totius Diocesis observari prout commodius visum fuerit. Domini Episcopi et Officiales præfati,

without success, though he has no doubt there are some in existence, perhaps mouldering in a parish chest. Some may, however, have been sent to the Bishop of London, and may be in the present Bishop's Registry; for the conclusion of “The Declaration of the Bishop of London, to be published to the lay people of this Diocese, concerning their Reconciliation, runs thus:—

“And they not so reconciled, every one of them shall have process made agaynst him, accordyng to the canons, as the case shall requyre; for which purpose, the pastours and curates of every paryshe shal be commaunded by their schedeacon to certifys me in writings of every man and woman's name that is not so reconciled.” Dated 19 Feb. 1554.



nec non omnes. Curati seu alii ad id deputati, habeunt Librum in quo nomen et cognomen Parochianorum reconciliatorum inscribantur et postea sciatur qui fuerint reconciliati et qui non.

“ Idem Domini Episcopi et Officiales Octava paschatis elapsa poterent facere visitationem Civitatis primo, deinde Dioc' et se qui non fuerent reconciliati poterint eos ad se vocare, et cognoscere propter quas ab erroribus suis nolint recedere et si in eis obstinate perseverarint, tum con' eos procedent.”(1)

Amongst the Articles set forth by Cardinal Pole to be inquired in his ordinary Visitations, with his Diocese of Canterbury (1557) was—

“ 8.—Item, If they do keep all the names of them that be reconciled to the duty of the Church.”

The practice of keeping the Registers in a chest with three locks and keys, has been long discontinued, as giving great useless trouble; and it being, in many cases, impossible to be attended to, a dispute existed in the Parish of Chatham, in the year 1766, upon this subject: the Churchwardens, having presented, at the previous Michaelmas Visitation, that the Parish Register was not kept, according to the 70<sup>th</sup> Canon, in a Chest with three locks, &c. The Clergyman of the Parish wrote his objections to the practice, in which he was supported by the opinion of Dr. Prideaux, and by the usage of almost every parish in the kingdom: his letters were published in a pamphlet, intituled “ Letters and Instruments relative to the dispute about the Register Book at Chatham.” In addition to these objections, it has been found that the keeping of the Registers in the church injured the books, in consequence of the dampness common in uninhabited buildings; and they were also liable to be stolen with the other contents of the coffer. It will have been observed, that the last Act requires them to be kept in a dry well-painted iron

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(1) Burnett's Reformation, vol. 3. p. 245.

chest, constantly kept locked in some dry, safe, and secure place, within the usual place of residence of the Rector, &c. ; if resident within the parish, or in the parish church.

With respect to the material for Register Books, it appears that the old Registers were generally of thin folio vellum or parchment ; and this was preferred, although the injunction of Lord Cromwell, in 1638, did not direct the use of any particular material. The arguments in favour of the use of this substance are, that it has long been used for Documents required to be preserved and handed down to posterity, such as title deeds, charters, pedigrees, &c. &c. It is not so liable to wear and tear by use as paper ; nor is it so easy for evil disposed persons to tear a leaf out of a book composed of this material ; and if it is properly prepared in the first instance, and kept in a dry place, it will resist the ravages of many centuries. On the other hand, it is sometimes so greasy that it will not receive the ink, without the use of pounce, and unless the ink is received into the substance of the parchment, it will rub off by friction ; but the pounce alluded to, by absorbing the greasy particles, renders it very susceptible of damp. The last Act requires these books to be of paper, (unless the Churchwardens of any parish shall require them to be of parchment), and this material has been found in excellent preservation several centuries after it has been written on : it takes up less room, it receives the ink freely, and requires no previous preparation. The transcripts, however, for the Bishop are, by the last Act, required to be on *parchment*.

The practice of not making the Entries in the proper Register Book, immediately after the ceremony is performed, is still in use, notwithstanding the third clause of the last Act, which directs it to be done " as soon as possible ; and in no case later than seven days after the ceremony shall have taken place, unless prevented by sickness or other unavoidable Impediment." On the perusal of these pages, the ill effects which this practice has given rise to, will have been observed, without rendering a repetition

necessary in this place. The subject, however, must not be left without noticing a case, shewing the hardship which accrued to an individual, in consequence of a mistake in copying from the Waste Book into the Register. The case alluded to is that of *May v. May*, 2 Str, 1072, where, on a question of legitimacy, it appeared that a General Register Book was kept in the parish, unto which the entries of baptism were made every three months, from a *Day Book*, into which they were made at the time, or in the course of the morning. In the *Day Book* were put the letters BB, which were said to signify *base-born*, but these letters were not inserted in the Register Book. A majority of the Judges present, on a trial at bar, were of opinion that there could not be *two* registers in the parish; and that the Register Book, being the *public* Book, was to be considered as the *original* Entry, from which Evidence was to be given, and that it could not be controlled or altered by any thing appearing in the *Day Book*, the Entry in which, appeared to be merely a private Memorandum kept for the purpose of assisting the clerk in making up the Register.(')

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(1) The decision in this case was doubtless legal; but there can be but one opinion, as to which was the *correct* Entry, the *original* or the *copy*, or whether it was not more likely, the Entry in the *Day Book* made at the time of the Baptism, should be more authentic, than a copy made from it three months afterwards.

## CHAPTER IV.

## OF THE TITLES OF PARISH REGISTERS.

Few of the old Books of Registers, are those in which the Entries were inserted at the time of the performance of the ceremonies to which they refer; but are generally transcripts made, in pursuance of Elizabeth's injunction in 1597. This may generally be ascertained by the title of the book, or by the similarity of the hand writing, up to the year 1598, or thereabouts, or by the signatures at the bottom of each page. The minister and the churchwardens of that year, in which the transcript was made, signed every page of the transcript, in order to give greater weight to its authenticity; and, in pursuance of the terms of the injunction; this circumstance will account for a commonly received opinion or impression, that the Clergymen, of the close of the fifteenth century, were longer lived than those of the present day: one instance of this supposed longevity was Mr. Simpson, of Keame, in Leicestershire, who was reported to have been incumbent for ninety-two years, and to have had the same Churchwardens seventy years!! A full account of this opinion will be found in Cole's MSS. (in the British Museum) vol. 41, p. 310. It occasioned, some years since, a subject for very general controversy, as the circumstance had been stated by several authors, who supported it by reference to different registers. Thus Duncumb, in his History of Herefordshire, in giving a description of the Parish of Bromyard, "Robert Barnes was Vicar during 82 years, and his name appears to parochial Registers annually, the whole of that period; one of the Churchwardens also continued from 1538 to 1600 inclusive."

On the oldest of the Registers of Castle Camps, in the first leaf, there are written three or four registers of ceremonies performed; and on the opposite page or cover, in the *same* hand at the bottom is written.

"Copied in Hast p me Goodwyn Styward, of the Manor of Castel-Campes."

A few specimens of singular titles to Register Books will now be added, some of which will confirm the remarks made at the commencement of this chapter.

#### Granciter.

"Granciter Register Book, as well of those *scatteringly* and out of order, in the old Reg<sup>r</sup>, before and in the reign of Qu: Eliz: from 24 of Aug: 1572, until this present year 1598; that is, from the first daye that I, Edward Braine, the writer hereof, and vicar of Granciter, did take care of this church."

"Johes. Butt, Infans, obiit: 19 Jan: 1539."

The title of the Register Book of baptisms, in the parish of Eynesbury in Hunts, is written thus.---

"Chylderne kyrsenyd in the 37<sup>th</sup> yere of oure Soufferande Lord Kyng Harre 8<sup>th</sup>."

"Jone Clopton, the Douter of Stevyn Clopton, kyrsenyd 7 Nov. 37 Hen. 8."

On the first leaf of the earliest Register Book, of the parish of Burnham, in Bucks, is the following memorandum of the incumbent in 1561 :---

"Jesus + Johannes Wrighteus inductus fuit Vicarius Burnhamiensis ipsis Calendis Novembris A. D. 1561, videlicet, ipso die omnium Scorū—Nullū. Registru hic invenit."

And in the same book, alluding to a former incumbent, the then incumbent writes,---

"Nullam *Ephimeriden* vel imperfectissimam reliquit."



The Parish Register of Walton, in 'Bucks, begins in 1598, the Rev. John Jones was the Rector, from 1572 to 1596: his successor wrote in it the following lines on him.

"Nec populum docuit, nec Jugera culta reliquit,  
 "Glebæ, *nec tali Nomina scripta Libro*  
 "Camber: et Incumbens Ulmos, malosq; rescindens  
 "Ædes fatalem diruit ante Diem."

The title of the Register of Ambroseden, in Oxfordshire, begins, "A true Register, &c., upon which Mr. Donkin observes, that, notwithstanding the above title, many of the weddings, christenings and burials have not been entered, nor could the exertions of Mr. Watson, or the industry of his successors, recover half the names that should have appeared in the Register: the following will shew in what way it was attempted to be done:---

"Richard Filia, Richard Peesley was 16 years of age when King Charles came to his Crown."

"Mary, the daughter of Richard Peesley, was 3 years old, when King Charles the 2<sup>nd</sup> came to his Crown."

The Parish Register of Hokington is thus prefaced.---

"The Regester Boke, for the Parris of Okington maid A. M. five hundreth lxi."

Buckland Newton, Dorsetshire.

"Registrum siæ Diarium nominum eorum confectum qui baptizati ac matrimonio conjuncti et sepulti fuerint infra paræchiam de Buckland in Comitatu Dorset a decimo sexto mensis Januarii anno Dom. juxta computationem Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, 1568 quo in posterum ad posteritatis memoriam propagari possint, diligenter examinatum transumptum et fideliter scriptum per Joannem Phillips, clericum notarium que publicum, vicarium ecclesiæ parochialis de Buckland prædicte anno Dom. 1698 reginæqu illustrissimæ in Christo principis ac dominæ nostræ, dominæ Elizabethæ, Dei gratia Angliæ Franciæ et Hiberniæ reginæ, fidei defensoris, &c. quadra-

gesimo primo, ex veteribus libris cartaceis præmissorum huc usque factis et reservatis ac in posterum conservandis."

To this is added a long letter in Latin, from Archbishop Parker, describing the office of notary, and appointing John Phillips to that office. Dated Feb. 10, 1573. OS.

Nether Compton, Dorsetshire.

" Liber in quo omnium tam matrimonio contrahendorum quam baptizandorum et sepeliendorum nomina inseruntur a Pancratio Browte, Nether Comptone rectore, anno Domini. 1538, primum conceptus et nunc per me Johannem Clerke, Rectorem, ibidem et uccessorem ejus anno Domini 1600, et anno regni Domine Elizabethæ, Dei gratia, Angliæ, Franciæ et Hiberniæ reginæ, &c. rescriptus."

Chelsea, Middlesex.

" A Booke begun in the House of God, for Registringe of all hristenings, marages and burials, within the Parishe of Chelsey, provided for that purpose, by I. Tomkins and Thomas Saunders, Church Wardens, the 19 daye of Marche, 1559; and now in the me and yere of Richarde Warde, Parson of Chelsey."

St. Andrew's, Holborn.

" Here begynneth the Burialles had in the tyme of our most gracious Soverayne, Lady Elizabeth, by the Grace of God, of England, Fraunce, and Ireland, Queene, Defendor of the ould auncient and Catholique Faithe, and in yearthe, next and immediately under Christ, and principale member of his Church, and supream overnoure of this Realme, as well in all causes, as over all persons, Ecclesiastical or Temporall, her rayne begynninge the xvii day of November, in the yeare of our Lord God, 1558."

Woughton Blean, Kent.

The Church Book of this Parish commences in the following manner.---

" Uppon All Sowles day, being the seconde day of November, in the yere of our Lord God M<sup>o</sup> v<sup>o</sup> lv, and in the seconde and

thyrde yere of the raygne of our Sovaigne. Lorde and Lady, Phillip and Mary, by the Grace of God, Kinge and Queene of England, France, Naples, Jerusalem, and Yrland, Defenders of the Faythe Prynce of Spayn and Cycell, Archeduke of Austrya Duke of of Aquittayn, Burgundy and Brabant, Cowntyces of Flanders and Tyrolle."

The Register of Elmore in Gloucestershire begins in 1560; but at the end of the first book is a part thus intituled:—

"Of Baptisme, Weddings and Burialls happening at Elmore, out of the Worshippfull House of Guyse, sythens the 6<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1556."

The House of Guyse here mentioned is Elmore Court, the Manorial Mansion, rebuilt in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, by John Guise Esq.

Newbottle, Northamptonshire.

"Thys Boke, mayde by y<sup>e</sup> exprese comandement of o<sup>r</sup> most Sovereigne Lorde Kyng Henry y<sup>e</sup> eight, by y<sup>e</sup> gce. of Gode Kyng of Englande and of France, Defender of y<sup>e</sup> feyth, Lord of Yreland, and y<sup>e</sup> spme. hede i erth of y<sup>e</sup> hys church of England, for certen goodly usys, by hys ryght excellent wyse and sage Counsail, divided and upon lyke cosideracons instituted as by the divisyons of y<sup>e</sup> same, in iij sondrie places here folowyng may apere, begynnynge i y<sup>e</sup> yere of hys pspous. and honorable reyne xxx. and i y<sup>e</sup> yere of our mayst. Christ md,xxx,vij., fyrst day of October, to be exercysed aft. y<sup>e</sup> forme as thereafter ensueth. The Lord Thos. Cruwell, Lord pryseale and vicegeret to hys hyghnese of y<sup>e</sup> ecclesiastycal jurisdiction, exhibiting to us of y<sup>e</sup> clergie y<sup>e</sup> same w<sup>t</sup> dyverse other at y<sup>e</sup> time lyke fruytful and laudable inventions, meted to y<sup>e</sup> glorie of God, to the Kynges hon<sup>r</sup> and to y<sup>e</sup> great benefyt of y<sup>e</sup> hys realme, and annihilatyng of y<sup>e</sup> bysshop of Rome hys long falsly ptensyd. and usurped powre. I, Edward Medley, beyng Vicar here, Robert Wyat and Thomas Harden, Churchwardens, stayting o<sup>r</sup> names, pmisyng o<sup>r</sup> feyth, natural obedyence, bonden servyce, lyke assyd-uouse preyer w<sup>t</sup> all fidelyte and obsequence to y<sup>e</sup> accoplessmet of y<sup>e</sup> cotetes of y<sup>e</sup> same.

Amen.

"Noiæ. isæfici. i. Xo. renatoru."

## CHAPTER V.

## OF THE REGISTERS OF BIRTHS AND BAPTISMS.

ON the first institution of this Rite of Baptism, it is unnecessary to comment; but on the subject of names, a few remarks may not be unacceptable.

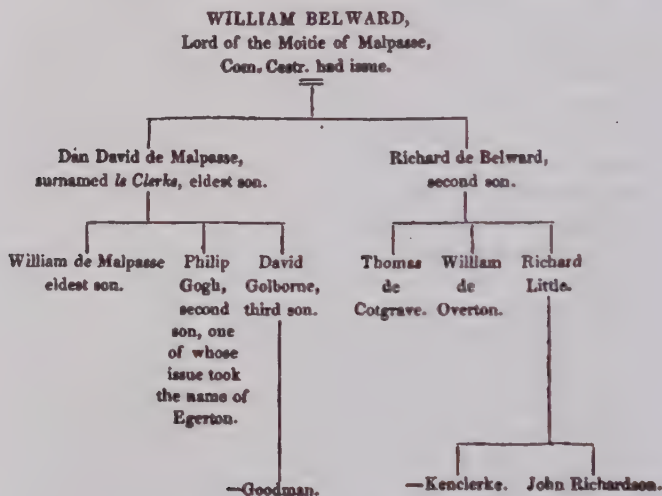
"Names, called in Latin *Nomina*, quasi *notamina* (says Camden) were first imposed for the distinction of persons, which we now call Christian names; after, for difference of families, which we call surnames, and have been especially respected, as whereon the glory and credit of men is grounded, and by which the same is conveyed to the knowledge of posterity; and every person had, in the beginning, one only proper name, as Adam, Joseph, &c."

Camden also states, that he could never find an hereditary surname in England before the Conquest. The surnames in Domesday-Book were brought in by the Normans, who not long before had taken them; but they were mostly noted with a "de," as *John de Baltrington*, *Walter de Hugget*; &c. or *Ricardus filius Roberti*; and that they were not settled among the common people, till about the reign of King Edw<sup>d</sup> the II. They are *sur*-names, not from *sire*, but *sur*, being *super*-added to the Christian names.

Places anciently gave names to persons, and not the contrary; thus, William, son of Roger Fitz-Valerine, in the time of King Henry I., being born in the Castle of Ioward in Wales, thence assumed the name of Howard, and transmitted it to his posterity. Edward of Caernarvon was so called from the place of his nativity, so Thomas of Mortherton, from the village in Yorkshire where he was born; and John of Gaunt, from the city of Gaunt in Flanders, the place of his birth.

Other names were derived from certain offices, &c.; thus Marshall, from being Marshall of the King's Palace, whence the Marshalls, Earls of Pembroke. De Mora, of the Moor, whence St. Maur now Seymour. It has been a commonly received impression, that the Family of Percy derived their name from an ancestor, having *pierced* the King of Scot's eye; but in fact it was taken from Percy Forest, in the Province of Maine.

These observations will shew that a man might have sons of very different surnames: this indeed is exemplified in a pedigree, given by Camden.—



" Little would any one think to look for the family and arms of Botteville in the present Viscount Weymouth, and this only because in the time of King Edw. the 4<sup>th</sup>, John de Botteville resided at one of the inns of court, and from thence was named " John of Th' Inne (Thynne); and as little would he suspect, that that poor deserted and exposed infant, at Newark upon Trent, commonly called Tom among us, should afterwards be metamorphosed into the great Dr. Thomas Magnus, that famous non-resident and Ambassado ."



It has been the custom of some clergymen, for the sake of brevity, to enter the baptism of a child thus, "Ann, of John and Mary Bond," without saying whether a son or daughter; but although there are certain names usually given to males, and others to females, yet there have been frequent instances where persons have departed from the general rule, and given their child a name not usually applied to its sex. The forms of entry of baptism, as printed in pursuance of the last act, are not calculated to prevent the continuance of this mode of entry, which is the more objectionable on account of the now common use of Surnames as Christian names.

It was not unusual, about the 16<sup>th</sup> century, for persons to have two or more children of the same Christian name, with a view perhaps of perpetuating their names, in case of the death of one: this will be seen by the following extract from the will of John Parnell de Gyrtton, 8 Mar., 1545 :

"Alice my wife and Old John my son to occupy my farm together, till olde John marries, and then she to have land and cattle. Young John my son, shall have Brenlay's land plowed and sowed at old John's cost."

And in the Register of Beby, Leicestershire, is the following.—

"1559, Item, 29<sup>th</sup> day of August was John and John Picke the children of Christopher and Anne baptized."

"Item, the 31<sup>st</sup> day of August, the same John and John were buried.

And one John Barker had three sons, named John Barker, and two daughters named Margaret Barker.

Guy de Laval, was so fond of the name of Guy, that he desired leave of Pope Paschal the II<sup>d</sup>, that all his sons and their descendants might be called by that name. The Pope, in reward of the services he had done to Christendom in Holy Land, granted his request, which was confirmed by Philip I. King of France. Guy de Laval, the 7<sup>th</sup> of that name, ratified the privileges, and ordained by his will

in 1268, that the eldest son of the House of Laval, should bear the name of Guy and the arms of Laval, on pain of losing the lordship of Laval (').

It was also a custom for women on the death of their husbands to resume their maiden names.

Besides, the baptizing of children, it appears to have been formerly the practice to baptize the Church Bells, and though we do not find the Entries made in the Register, yet the bells themselves bear testimony to the fact, as well as of the date of their manufacture, and the name of the maker.—John Stell, in his "*Beehive of the Romish Church*," 1580, p. 18, says, "Nowe over and above all this the Belles are not only conjured and hallowed, but are also baptized, and have apoynted for them Godfathers, which hold the rope (wherewith they are tied) in their handes, and doe answere, and say Amen to that which the Suffragane or Bishop doth speak or demand of the Belle; and then they put a new Coat or Garment upon the Belle, and so conjure it, to the driving away of all the power, craft, and subtiltie of the Devill, and to the benefit and profit of the Souls of them that bee dead (especially if they be rich, and can paye the Sexton well) and for many other like thynges. Insomuch, that the Belles are so holy, that so long as the Church and the people are (upon any occasion) excommunicate they may not bee rung."

Bishop Kennett says, that until the year 1660, "the account of Christenings had been neglected more than that of Burials, one and the chief cause whereof was a religious opinion against the baptizing of infants, either as unlawful or unnecessary. A second reason was the scruples which many public ministers would make of the *worthiness* of parents to have their children baptized, which forced such questioned parents, who did also not believe the necessity of having their children baptized, by such scruples, to carry them unto such other ministers as having

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(1) *Histoire de Sablé par M. Menage.*

performed the thing, had not the authority or command of the Register to enter the names of the baptized."

"A third reason was, that a little fee was to be paid for the registering. Upon the whole matter, it is most certain, that the number of Heterodox Believers between 1560 and 1660 was very great, and so very peevish were they as not to have the Births of their children registered." But in addition to this, many clergymen refused to make the Entry of Baptism in the Register until the child had been brought to church, by which they intended to prevent the custom of private baptism.

On the subject of this *worthiness* of parents, it may not be irrelevant to give a specimen of the Entries in the Church Session Books of Scotland, where this is noticed, after recording a reproof, given by the Rev. Andrew Burn, the minister of Anstruther Wester, in Fifeshire, to a magistrate of that Burgh, for his aiding in the Rebellion of 1715.

Jan<sup>y</sup> 25, 1717. John Lyall, late Magistrate of this Burgh, confesses his sinful compliance in the late rebellion, drinking the pretender Marr, and several other rebels healths att the Cross, his ordering the Boats over the water w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> Rebels, his ordering to seat a Bank for payment of cess to Marr, his counteracting the Government's order, in commanding to take up the Boats to y<sup>e</sup> shoar when the Government had ordered y<sup>e</sup> to the South Shoar, and several other things he confesses, and professes his sorrow for the same; and promises to walk more regularly in time coming, and to worship God in his Family, upon which the minister condescends to baptize his Child."

In the year 1747, Books were provided<sup>(1)</sup> at the Herald's College, for the purpose of registering Births in London, and within the Bills of Mortality, in the Colonies, in the Country, and the Births of persons of any age, born

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(1) A few Entries were made, at that time, but the measure failed in what the College of Arms proposed.

before Christmas Day, 1747. The plan to be pursued was, that one or both parents were to come in person, or in case that could not be done, two persons who were present at the birth, the midwife for one, if convenient, and there sign the Entry, which was entered by two Officers of Arms in the Register Book, on paying the fee of half-a-crown, and at the same time an attested Certificate of the Entry made, was to be given on parchment, and sealed with the seal of the office. Persons at a distance were to draw up a Certificate, signed by both or one of them, or by two persons present, and make affidavit of the truth, which Certificate and Affidavit were to be transmitted, with the fee of half-a-crown, and would then be duly entered. The time and place of the parents marriage was also to be given, together with the name of the mother's father, thus :—

“ Our Son John } was born at our House } in the parish  
 Daughter Ann } Lodgings }  
 of St. John } in the { City of London } on the 4th day of June, in  
 Hatfield } { County of Essex }  
 the year 1741, we having been married at St. Bride's, in London,  
 on the 2<sup>d</sup> day of May, in the year 1740, as witness our hands,  
 this 6<sup>th</sup> of Jan<sup>r</sup> 1747.

Rd. Doe, Son of John Doe, by Ann, his Wife, Daughter of Thos. Stiles.

Mary Doe, Daughter of John Roe of { St. Luke's } in the County of York.  
 { Ham } in the County of Essex.

Witnesses present at the Birth of }  
 John Doe, on June 4th 1741, as above. }

A. B. Midwife,

C. D. Nurse.”

In the Abstract of the Answers and Returns made pursuant to an Act of 1st Geo. IV. intituled “ An Act for taking an account of the Population of Great Britain, and of the Increase and Diminution thereof;” the Editor states, that the Registers of Baptisms are deficient from several causes. 1st. Because many Dissenters of every denomination (those especially who reside at a distance from any

other Burial place), bury their dead in the cemeteries of the Established Church, though they baptize after their own manner, or not at all.—2dly, Some irreligious persons, especially in large towns, neglect the rite of Baptism altogether(1).—3dly, Some die before Baptism; the great defect in Baptisms heretofore arose from private Baptisms, which is carried to an extent not at all in the contemplation of the Founders of the Church of England. The practice of the Clergy is not uniform on this point, and it appears from the remarks subjoined to some of the Parish Register Returns of 1811, that the Registry of private Baptisms was refused in many places, from a conscientious desire to induce parents to cause their children to be publicly received into the Congregation. But the 52d Geo. III. no longer leaves this optional(2).

The *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica* mentions that in the Register of Knipton, in Leicestershire, from 1656 to 1660, the children are registered from Births; Baptisms are not even mentioned;—but this was very general, for Oliver Cromwell's order in 1653 directs the registry of *Births*.

The following Entries will serve to shew, in some measure, the origin of Surnames; and to account for the singular names which are constantly met with. The first entry (but for the other particulars) might lead to suppose the child to have been of French extraction.

“A woman child, of the age of one year and a half or thereabouts, being found in her swaddling Clothes, layed at the Ladys Coopers Gate, baptized by the Name of Mary Troovie, 10<sup>th</sup> Oct<sup>r</sup>.”

(Kensington Reg<sup>r</sup>.)

(1) In the Annals of Sandwich, the following order is recorded: “1571. The Dutch shall have their children baptized according to the order now here used, under pain of banishment.”

(2) In addition to this it should be observed, that many Hospitals baptize and bury. The London Lying-in Hospital has a Register of the Baptism of all the children born in that establishment.



(Baptized.) "Joane, whome we maye call Yorkkooppe, because she was the Bastarde Dawghter, as y<sup>e</sup> is comonlye reported, of onę John York and Anne Cooper, 3 Ap<sup>r</sup>, 1595."

(Landbeche Reg<sup>r</sup>.)

In the Register of St. Lawrence, Jury, there are the Baptisms of a great many Foundlings, to whom the Surname of *Lawrence* has been invariably given('), and the same practice now exists in that parish, though the opportunities for it are not so frequent.

In order to give facility to the Astrologer in "casting the nativity," or telling the fortune of a child, should it be desired, great precision was occasionally observed in the Entry of the Birth, as will be found in the Register of Hawsted, in Suffolk.

"M<sup>d</sup>. That Mr. Robert Drury, the first Sonne of Mr. William Drury, Esquire, was born 30 Jan. betwixt 4 and 5 of the clock in the Morning, the Sunne in Libra, Anno 1574, at Durham House, within the Parish of Westminster."

(1) By the 2d Geo. III, cap. 22. A Register Book is directed to be kept by every parish within the Bills of Mortality, in which are to be entered all infants under four years, who should be in any Workhouse, or place provided for the maintenance of the poor, "with the times when they were received, their names, age, and whatever description relates to them as far as can be traced." Sec. 7. That in case any infant be received into the Workhouse, &c. before the said infant is baptized, due care should be taken to baptize the same, so that the Christian and true Surname, if known, and if not known, a Surname to be given by the Churchwardens and Overseers, be regularly entered in the said book, and the name and surname of such infant be also registered in the Parish Register of the Parish; and in case of a difficulty in distinguishing children, some proper mark should be affixed to the child's clothes, or hung round his or her neck. A copy of this Register to be annually deposited with the Company of Parish Clerks, and to contain the following particulars, viz. name of child, whether foundling, bastard, or casualty---age, when born or when admitted---by whom sent, and what sum received with it---when died, or when discharged---if nursed by the mother---nurses name, abode, &c. &c.

If this act is still in force (and it is believed that it has not been repealed), it is but very partially, if at all, attended to; although its provisions are calculated to be very serviceable.

The following Entries are extracted from various Registers, on account of some peculiarity.

" The Son of Janken, the Shepherd, baptized."

" 1656. Thomas, Son of Frances Paget, born 17 June."

Milton Reg<sup>r</sup>.

" 1659. France Harrish was born 29 Jan. (D<sup>o</sup>)

" 1661. Philip, Son of Sam. Williams (1), bapt.

Apr. 7."

(D<sup>o</sup>)

" 1548. Samuel, a Londoner, the 23<sup>d</sup> May."

Kensington Reg<sup>r</sup>.

Hokington,

Baptisms, 1587.

W<sup>m</sup> Mumford, 30 Dec :

W<sup>m</sup> Mumford, 28 Jan :

Ann Cole, 9 June.

1611.

Geo: S. of Ffenson Benet and Jone, bapt:

N. B. This is a mistake of the Clerk, the fact is, that in 1565, Vincent Goodwin was Vicar, and several of his parishioners named their children after him; but the Clerk transformed it into Ffenson, as he did *Ursula*, into 'Osurley,' 'Usurley,' Oursley," &c.

In Cottenham Register,

" Rob<sup>t</sup> Marshall and Mark Benton, of Cotenham, make oath, that John Cooke. son of John Cooke, and Eliz. his late Wife, was born in Sept<sup>r</sup> 1689.

Jurat apud Cantabr 17 Martii 1710, coram me Ricardo

Penson Comissionar secundum formam Statuti, &c.

(1) On the Trial of Oldham v. Attorney General, in 1834. Mr. Justice Best considered a child legitimate, although in the Entry of Baptism, the Father only was mentioned.

In the same Register,

" Ici commence l'an de nostre Seigneur 1636, Quicunque certes estes baptisez, vous avez vestu Christ; Repentez vous, et qu'un chascun soit baptise' au nom de Jesus."

Baptized.—" 1641, Jane, the Daughter of John Mayle, quidem Johannis est Junioris a tribus de iste nomine et Judithe uxore suis baptizata primo Junii."

The following is a Specimen of the manner of registering Baptisms in France, being a *certificate* of an Entry in the Register.

" Extrait des Registres de la paroisse de St. Marcellin de Basançon."

" Jean Francois Edoüard, fils de Monsieur Edoüard Acton, Gentilhomme Anglois, et de Madame Catherine Louis son Epouse a été baptisé le trois Juin mil Sept. cent trente six—il a eu pour parrein Monsieur Jean Etienne Caboud, Lieutenant General du Bailliage de Basançon, et pour Marreine Madame Francoise d'Osson."

Certifie le present extrait conforme a l'original: a  
Basançon 10 May, 1762.

D. George Couderet Ret: Ben:  
Cure' de St. Marcellin.

Bishop Wearmouth.

" March 27, 1695, a person aged about 20 years, a Tawny, borne at the Bay of Bengal, in the East Indies, and being taken captive by the English, in his minoritie, was (after due examination of himself and witnesses) baptized, and named John Weremouth, by me,

T. O.

Curate."

Whitworth Durham.

" 1645. July 27, James, Son of Ambrose Bell, of Juddo, was the last Baptism with the Book of Common Prayer in this Parish."

" Charles the II<sup>d</sup>. proclaimed at London, May 8<sup>th</sup>, and at Durham, 12<sup>th</sup> May, 1660. on which day I, Stephen Hogg, began to use again the Book of Common Prayer."

Eaton, in Rutlandshire.

" 1586. Mr. Henry Hastings, Son and Heir of Mr. Francis Hastings, was born on St. Mark's Even, April 24, between the hours of 10 and 11 of the clock at night, Sign Sagit: secund: die pleni lunii Marte in Taurum intrato die precedente; and was christened May 17."

It has been the custom, with some persons, to enter the Births of their children at the place where they have resided for a considerable time, or where they may have property or estates, thus at Winterborne Earles,—

" Edward Nicholas nascitur quarto die Aprilis circa deciam noctis horam 48 post horam natû, 1593. 3<sup>o</sup> Sabb<sup>o</sup> die."

and at a subsequent period when the family had ceased to reside in the parish, there is in its Register,

" William Nicholas, Son of Sir John Nicholas, Knight of the Bath, was born at Spring Garden, on Munday, the 13<sup>th</sup> day of Aprill, 1668."

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" July 17, 1655, William Clark, son of John Clark, a Soldier, and Thomasine, his Wife, who herself went for a Souldier, and was billeted at the Three Hammers, in East Smithfield, about seven months, and after was delivered of this Child, the 16<sup>th</sup> day of his July, and was baptized the 17<sup>th</sup> in her lodging, being one Mr. Tubber's House. She had been a Souldier, by her own confession, about five years, and was some time Drummer to the Company."

At St. Bennet, Paul's Wharf, London.

" An Infant crisand."

" Thomas Tuckwell, Son of Adam Clark, was born the 20 of June, 1729.

He stands registered 14 days before that time, besides Adam Clark was his *Godfather*, and not his Father.

Stalbridge, Dorsetshire.

" 1699, Jan. 26. Glory be to God.—Dinah Masters, my Son, aged 22 years, baptized in Stalbridge Church."

Quorndon, Leicestershire.

" Master Edward Farnham, and Mary his Wife, baptized Phillis, his Daughter, June 27, 1677."

Loughborough, Ditto.

" 1581, Margaret Bannister, Daughter of William Bannister, going after the manner of roguish Egyptians, was baptized the 2d of April."

Thurcaston, Ditto.

" Nov. 19, 1763, John Cragg of Thurcaston, an adult, in his 75th year, being bed-ridden, was privately baptized, at his own request. N. B. His Father and Mother had been rigid Anabaptists.

R. Hurd, Rector."

Appleby Magna, Ditto.

1699. " Basil, the Son of Clifton Harcourt, Yeoman, and Susanna his Wife, not worth £50 in land, nor £600 in personal Estate, July 25."

Ayleston, Ditto.

" 1639, March 8, was baptized at Enderby, Henrye, the Son of Henrye Taylor, of Lubsthorp, Mason, and of Prudence



his Wife, by reason of a grate flood hindering passage to our Church.”<sup>(1)</sup>

### Loughborough.

“ 1540, John Dawson, the Son of Henry Dawson, was baptized the 8th day of May. This John Dawson did copy and write out this book out of the old paper Book, when he was at the age of three score and one years, and at that time, had been Schoolmaster of the Grammar School in Loughborough 36 years, and in his time taught and brought up many Scholars, Gentlemen, men of worship, justices of peace, and poor men’s sons, profitable to the Church of God, preachers and ministers beneficial and comfortable to the Commonwealth—advancing greatly the Glory of God.”

### Allhallows. Bread Street.

“ 1667, June 19, was born and christened, Michael, son of Michael and Phebe Pyndar; but by reason of the dreadful fire, was born in Coleman Street, in Sir William Bateman’s House,<sup>(2)</sup> where many of this parish, for some time inhabited.”

The Register of Baptisms, in this parish, contains the entry of Baptism of the author of “ Paradise Lost” it is in the following form:—

“ The 20<sup>th</sup> day of December, 1608, was baptized John, the sonne of John Mylton, Scrivener.

(1) About the year 1776, there appears to have been an objection by the parishioners of Chatham, against the christening of children belonging to the parish of Gillingham, at their Church, the Minister in his defence, attributes the circumstance more to the importunity of the parents who lived nearer Chatham than their own parish Church, than to the wish of the Minister, and that the letters “ G” in “ Gillingham,” were set against those Entries, and all bastards were properly stigmatised.

(2) Perhaps Sir William had, like many others, after this calamitous fire, thrown open his mansion as a refuge for the houseless, many hundreds of whom there must have been, on the destruction of 13,200 houses.

## St. Andrews, Holborn.

"Margaret and Clare, twins, daughters of Thomas Lord Arundel and of Anne his Lady was baptized (*as it was reported*) Feb: 1619, in the Lord Arundell's house in Castle Yard in Holborn, by one of his chaplains and recorded here."

"1634, Sept: Anna, base born<sup>(1)</sup> of Frances Forest, and Sir Francis Duncum Knt., out of Lancelot Dod's house in Field Lane."

"1635, Charles Wriothlesley, son and heir of Thomas Wriothlesley, Earl of Southampton, and Dame Rachael his Countess, was born in Southampton House, in Holborn, June 1635, and baptized in the said house the same month. Rex . . . lus ejus compater erat."

## St. Anne's, Blackfriars, London.

"1596, *Epolenep*<sup>(1)</sup> Crookes, son of Mr. Recorder, Dec. 29."

## Nunney, Somersetshire.

"Roger Starr, baptized, Dec. 17. 1604.

He clymed up a ladder to the top of the house, 23 Oct. 1606, being seven weeks and odd days less than two years old."

## South Pickenham, Norfolk.

"Aug. 31, 1634. Baptizatus est Franciscus filius Mariæ

(1) It was stated, on a recent trial, that Mr Rose's Act had provided a form for entering the baptism of illegitimate children: upon reference, however, to that Act, I do not find such a provision. The method of such Entries varies in different parishes, some inserting the name of the reputed father and mother, and others the mother only.

In St. Saviour's Parish, Southwark, is the following minute made at a vestry in 1613, "That the Minister shall be turned out at the pleasure of the Vestry, and that he shall not baptize any bastard without half a day's notice to be given to the wardens."

The Rituale of the Roman Catholic Church prescribes the form of entry of baptism of illegitimate children. Of a passage respecting it, I have however, been able to get only the following extract, not having met with the right edition.

"Ritual Rom: p. 409. Si Infans non fuerit ex legitimo matrimonio natus, scribatur nomen, &c. (omnis tamen infamiae vitetur occasio.)"

(2) Penelope.

Walker quæ (ut ipsa ait) ante triennium apud Thirton in agro Norfolkici cuidam fidicini nomine Johanne Botewright nupta est, sed Is vagabundus nebulo et nullius Laris Homuncio existens, postquam Mariam suam Gravidam fecisset, hûc eam parituram nisit, quo infans natus hujus parocicæ Impensis aleretur : atque, in tunc modum jam secundo huic Villæ vafre imposuit."

" 1636, Elizabetha filia Jacobi Hunter ex Annâ Uxore ejus in psius plateis sub Australi parte Magnæ Ulmi October 9 in Lucem Edita est, et eodem dio sacro baptisinate aspersa est."

" 1610, Francisca filia Henrici Bedingfield Mil'et Elizabethæ Jxoris 10 Januarij Que quidem nata fuit de die Dominico viz. ricissimo die mensis Decembris anno predicto inter horam sextam t septinam ante meridiem. Compatr' Robert' Wynde Miles. Jx' Edmundi Munford Militis et Alicia Uxor Thomæ Bradbury r'."

### Herne, Kent.

" 1565, John Jarvys had two woemen children baptized at ome joyned together in the belly, and havynge each the one of eir armes lyinge at one of their own shoulders, and in all other arts well proportioned children, buried Aug. 29."

" 1567, William Lawson, an infant, christend by the woe-en, (') buried 21 Martii.

### St. Mary's, Litchfield.

" Oct. 12, 1591, Margaret, D' of Walter Henningham, de

(1) By the ecclesiastical law, the rite of baptism may be administered by any son in case of necessity. In the Archbishop of York's Injunctions to his Clergy be following :—

" Item. All curates must openly, in the church, teach and instruct the myd-wifes of the very wordes and fourme of Baptisme, to thentents, that they may use them perfectly, and none oder." &c.

by way of caution to persons assuming that office, it may be well to notice awkward mistake, as recorded in the Register of Hanwell :

Hanwell, Middlesex,

daughter

" Thomas, son of Thomas Messenger and Elizabeth his wife, was born and ized Oct: 24, 1731, by the midwife at the Font, called a boy, and named by the mther, Thomas, but proved a girl !!"

Pypehall, baptized by the mydwyfe, and as yett not broughte to y<sup>e</sup> Church to be there examyned and testified by them that were there presente."

Stanwell, Middlesex.

"Robert, John and Mary Nash, *trines*, (1) baptized Feb. 7, buried Feb. 14, 1772."

Hartinge, Sussex.

"the seventh day of August was buryed Jone Newman, the daught. of Robert Newman, *domi baptizata erat p. obstetricem*, 1583."

Ickenham, Middlesex.

"Katherine the Dowgter of the Lord Hastynge, and the Lady his Wyff, was borne the Saturday before our Lady-day, th<sup>e</sup> assumption being the 11 day of August, and was christened the 20 of August, the godmother, Quene Kateryn, by her debite, beyng her Syster, one M<sup>r</sup> Harberd's Wiff; the other godmother, the Lady Margaret Dugles, the Kyng's nece, and the godfather the Lord Russell, beyng the Lorde Prive Seale, by hys debite, Master Francis Russell, hys Son and Heyre, 1542."

Hillingdon, Middlesex.

"Baptisms. Elizabeth, the daughter of William Pratt, Feb: 25, 1671-2. The first that in eleven years, was baptized with water in the font, the custom being in this place to baptize out of a bason, after the Presbyterian manner, only set in the Font, which I could never get reformed, till I had gotten a new clerk, John Brown, who presently did what I appointed to be done."

St. Alkmund's, Derby.

"1712. Baptized Elizabeth and Honeylove, the daughter of John King, Nov<sup>r</sup> 5<sup>th</sup>."

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(1) Three at a birth.

" Note.—Elizabeth was about three years old. The reason why she was baptized at the same time in the Church with Honeylove, the infant, was this: I had sometye before preached concerning baptism, and proved that the dissenting teachers have no authority to baptize, and consequently that children that had been sprinkled by em, ought to be baptized by an Episcopal minister. The father was so fully convinced by what was said, that he came to me and desired me baptize the said child."

#### Hillingdon, Middlesex.

William, the son of John Poker and Jane his wife, natus, enatus, denatus die eodem, summa scilicet Dei miseratione tam in puerum, quam in parentes, cum monstrosus fuit Infans non ex defectu sed excessu partium, una cum conformatione aliarum, habd nona. March 12, 1672-3.

#### Uxbridge, Ditto.

1668, May 28. Anne, the daughter of Simon Cottiford and of Anne his wife, borne and baptized the 23<sup>d</sup> of June following borne about 5 a'clocke in the morning, *signe in the brest, borne one day Thursday.*

#### Tunstall, Kent.

" 1662, James Cromer, f W<sup>m</sup> n, b and 1, 25 Maij.

Barbara Cromer, n and b, eodem die."

The death of Sir Isaac Newton's Father and the subsequent baptism of Sir Isaac, is to be found in the register of

Colsterworth.(1)

" 1642, Isaac Newton buried Oct 6."

" ——— Isaac, Sonne of Isaac and Hanna Newton, baptized n. 1."

(1) Sir Isaac was born at Woolsthorpe in this parish, on Christmas Day, 16, O. S.



## Peterborough.

" 1569,—August, Sarah Stowkes, the Daughter of Henry Stowkes, was christned the x. day, who afterwards in the year of our Lord God 1699, did cōpye this Register Book w<sup>th</sup> her own hands, then being the Wife of John Lansdune."

" 1572, October. Here left (Gilbert) Bull to kepe the Book, and then began a loss of names."

" 1595, Thomas Lansdown, the Sonne of John Lansdown, was christned the xiii day of Feb<sup>r</sup> being St. Valentynes day. God endue him w<sup>th</sup> his Grace."

## Peterborough Cathedral Register.

" 1660, Hellin Austen, the daughter of Humphrey Austen, was born the 20th of February, being Wednesday, and baptized the 7th of March in the Cathedral Church, being the first that was christened in the Font there after the setting it up. The said Font being pull'd down, and the lead taken out of it by Cromwell's souldiers, Anno Dom. 1643."

Barton.—The following entry appears at the commencement of the Christenings in 1653, and was very probably inserted by the minister of the parish, as a precedent for his successors :—

" The manner of registering of Christnings was thus of old, as hath appeared by an ancient Register. Jane Gwyn nata fuit die Mercurii, circa horam tertiam post meridiem. ultimo die Januarii Anno Dni. 1687, et baptizata quarto die Februarii, anno predicto. Her Unkle William Griffith, Godfather, Mrs. Humphrys and Mrs. Mulshoe, Godmothers.

Transcribed by

William Henchman, Minister, 1663."

## Staplehurst, Kent, (1538.)

" The firste day of Octobre (1539), ther was baptised a dawgh-ter of Thomas Roberts the younger, whose name is Elisabeth."

(1547) "Ther was baptised by the Midwyffe and so buried, the childe of Thoms. Goldhm., called Creature.(1)

"The thirde daye of December Anno Regni Regine Nostre Marie primo Annoq: dni : milcimo quingentiscesm, liij, 1553, was baptysed Symon, the Sonne of that noble Warryoure Wylyam Pytt."

"1646, December 4. Boorn into the World Elizabeth Date (?) of Danyell Kingsnoth, of Margreet his Wif."

"1560, the vijth day off Apell, There was baptised Willm. Sone of William Fant, whiche Childe was borne in troublous days and therefor not chrystned tyll it was a yere old."

"1 Ed. 6, the xxvij of Apryle, there were borne ij Childre of Alex<sup>nd</sup>er Beerye, the one christned at home, and so deceased called Creature, the other christned at church called Joha."

"1552, the xxx<sup>th</sup> daye of Novembre was baptызed a cople of children toged<sup>r</sup> y<sup>r</sup> Goodman Baylyf Chylde w<sup>ch</sup> was a dawght<sup>r</sup> and Goodman Baker's sonne."

1562, 5 March. "Ther was baptised John y<sup>e</sup> son of Jone Gyles a harlotte."

"1557, 18 eiusd<sup>m</sup> tingebat<sup>r</sup> sacro fonte Robert. filius Edwardi Bapterst copri... Roberto Batterst ac Thoma Batterst comre. Maria Bucherst."

### St. Bridget's, Chester.

The Register of Baptisms from 1560 to 1583 does not state who are the parents of the children baptized (?), and for a long time after 1583, only gives the name of the father. The form of the first entries are thus :—

"1560, Jane Bunbury, 27 Dec. 1560."

(1) It appears to have been the custom, in this parish, whenever a child was aptised by the midwife, to name it thus, and the name seems to favour the supposition that it was a baptism before birth. The Rubric gives the following directions for the baptism of infants in such cases :—

"Nemo in utero matris clausus baptisari debet, sed si infans caput emiseric, et periculum mortis imminet, baptizetur in capite, nec postea si vivus evaserit, erit r<sup>u</sup>m baptizandus. At si aliud membrum emiseric, quod vitalem indicet motum, in eo, si periculum pendcat, baptizetur," &c.—ROM. RIT.

(2) Daughter.

(3) This is by no means uncommon in Registers of that date.

but in Trinity Parish, in the same city, the Fathers, God-fathers, and Godmothers are inserted from 1600 to 1624, thus:—

" 1601, 6 Janary. To Ashton Baker a Sonne named Rafe, G.F. Mr. Rose Berkenhead and Rafe Crosse G.M. Mrs. Elizabeth Thropp."

" 1620, 14 March, Margret dau. to Rob<sup>t</sup> Flecher Baker, Rafe Cratchley, Margret Harndy and Marg<sup>t</sup> Blanchard, Gossips."

#### Birchington, Kent.

" 1578, 1 Novembris baptizata Elizabetha filia Johis Underdome cuius Susceptores Johes Sacket, uxor Henrici Alchorne et uxor Rob<sup>t</sup> Philippe."

#### Debting, Kent.

" 1629, Ellenor, the daughter of Henry Richardson's wife was baptized Novembris 29<sup>o</sup>. This child is thus registered because it was begot before Richardson married her. Shee not living neere him neither, but she in Sussex and he in Debting, and indeed she confessed another father that p<sup>r</sup>missed her marriage dwelling in Sussex, but his name I know not."

#### Wrotham.

" Joan, y<sup>e</sup> daughter of Alice Wrynner (filia nullius) was baptized y<sup>e</sup> 21st day of December."

" 1580, Elizabeth, the daughter of (1) ——— was baptised y<sup>e</sup> 29th of October."

" 1580, Alice the daughter of ———, was baptised y<sup>e</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> of October."

#### Minster.

" 1620, January 21, Johanna filia Tamsin Smith Adulterina."

(1) There are many blanks in this Register for the names of parties, even in the Entries of Marriage; and in several instances where infants have been baptised "Frances," a blank has been left for the sex.

## CHAPTER VI.

## OF THE REGISTERS OF BURIALS.

THE title of this chapter may perhaps allow some remarks on the subject of Christian burial, as practised in civilized countries. A great change has taken place within the last few centuries in this respect. In the patriarchal times we see that persons were buried in fields and caves, and in places apart from the habitation of man. In the case of Rachel this was the case, and the notice of her sepulture exhibits the antiquity of grave-stones and monuments. "And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem, and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave, that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." And Jacob, too, after being embalmed according to the Egyptian custom, was buried "in the cave of the field of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession for a burying-place, of Ephron the Hittite, before Mamre,"<sup>(1)</sup> as was also Abraham and Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, and Leah. And of Joseph's death it is noticed, "So Joseph died, being a hundred and ten years old, and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin, in Egypt."<sup>(2)</sup> In passing through the Scriptures, we find not only the time, but the place of burial of many individuals is recorded.

The old Roman law of the Twelve Tables contains this clause: "*Hominem mortuum intra urbem ne sepelito, neve urito.*" But, subsequently, in Catholic countries, Bishops and Martyrs began to be interred in the Cloisters

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(1) Gen. xxxv. 19, 20.

(2) Gen. l. 26.

round the outside of the Churches; afterwards the Bishops entered the Churches and the rich laity took the Cloisters; then the Clergy were promoted to the Choir, and the laity entered the Church; then all persons entered the Churchyard, the Cloister, the Church, and the Chancel, according as their money, or the power of their relatives could be turned to the advantage of the Clergy, who asserted a more unlimited authority over the disposal of the dead in the Peninsula, than in any other country; the corpses of all classes of Spaniards and Portuguese before interment were, and are, habited according to their directions; and whatever aversion a man may have had for Monks during his life, he is compelled to go to Heaven, or to be prayed for out of purgatory, in the uniform of a Monk after his death.

Gervase, of Canterbury, relates, that it was said formerly "*Civitas non est mortuorum sed vivorum*," because Cemeteries were always without the cities; not only they did not at one time bury in Churches, but it was not even permitted to build them, not even Oratories, in places where any one had been interred. In all the Letters of St. Gregory, where any permission is granted for the building of a Church there is always this proviso, "*Si nullum corpus ibi constat humatum*." (1)

Many great and good men have entertained scruples on the practice of interment in Churches. The example of the virtuous and primitive Confessor, Archbishop Sancroft, who ordered himself to be buried in the Churchyard of Fresingfield, in Suffolk, thinking it improper that the House of God should be made the repository of sinful man, ought to command the imitation of less deserving persons; perhaps it had an influence over the mind of his successor, Archbishop Secker, who ordered himself to be buried in the Churchyard of Lambeth. The Bishops of London, in succession, from Bishop Compton to Bishop Hayter, who

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(1) Menagiana, Tome. 3, p. 331.



died in 1762, inclusive, have been buried in Fulham Churchyard.<sup>(1)</sup>

Of the same opinion were Dr. Edward Rainbow, Bishop of Carlisle; Sir Matthew Hale, who used to say that Churches were for the living and the Churchyards for the dead<sup>(2)</sup>; Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, who "did not hold God's house a meet repository for the greatest saint;" and Wm. Bedell, Bishop of Kilmore, who made a Canon in his Synod to the following effect:—

"IX. Ut Corpora Defunctorum deinceps in Ecclesiis non humentur, sed nec intra quintum pedem á pariete extrorsum."

Sir Thomas Latymer, of Braibroke, in Northamptonshire, by his will directed thus:—

"I Thomas Latymer of Braybroke a fals knyghte to God, &c. my wrecchyd body to be buried where that ever I dye in the next Chirche Yerde God vouchsafe and naut in the Chirche, but in the utterist Corner, as he that ys unworthy to lyn therein, save the merci of God."

Dr. Isaac Barrow, Bishop of St. Asaph, was buried in a Churchyard, although, from his having generously repaired and endowed his Cathedral, he might be considered to have a claim of interment within its walls; and Baldwin, the great civilian, severely censures this indecent liberty, and questions whether he shall call it a superstition or an impudent ambition. Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, was the first who made vaults under the Chancel, and even under the Altar, when he rebuilt the Choir of Canterbury, about 1075.<sup>(3)</sup>

But the interment of persons even in Churchyards, situate in the midst of great cities and towns, has been considered unwholesome; for, in order to prevent the

(1) Cole's MSS. vol. 4, p. 100.

(2) The Assembly at Edinburgh, in 1588, prohibited the burying in Kirks.

(3) Cole's MSS. vol. 4.

further accumulation of mortal remains in the City of Paris, the Council of State, in 1785, directed the largest of the Cemeteries to be converted into a square, and the bones of seven centuries to be removed; and within three years from that time, the remains of nearly a million and a half of people were deposited at the Catacombs. During the Revolution, the same course was observed with respect to the other burial places, so that these vaults now contain innumerable generations. In 1790, the National Assembly passed a law, ordering all the cities, towns, and villages of the kingdom to abandon their ancient burial-grounds, and to make new Cemeteries without their precincts. In consequence of this law, three Cemeteries were inclosed for Paris without the Barriers, viz. those of Montmartre, of Père la Chaise, and of Vaugirard.(1)

In addition to what has been already said on the irreligious and unwholesome custom of burying in Churches, the opinion of the Rev. Mr. Colbatch, in the Register of Great and Little Abingdon, is thus expressed:—

“Burial without a Coffin, 1<sup>l</sup>. For a Grave in the Church, 6<sup>8</sup> 9<sup>d</sup> in the Chancel, 13<sup>8</sup> 4<sup>d</sup>. But the most honorable grave of any man whatsoever, is in the Churchyard, because that shows most honor to God's House. The great first Christian Emperor Constantine, and many of his successors, were buried in the Churchyard.”

The Parish Registers of Burials, as to correctness, are generally considered to be next to that of marriages. The Abstract of the Population Returns mentions these to be deficient in the following particulars:—

1. Because many Congregations of Dissenters in towns, have their own Burial Ground, as have also the Jews and Roman Catholics in London.

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(1) It had been well if the Revolutionists had been contented with this change, but in Nov. 1793, they ordered that in all Burial Places a monument should be erected, representing *Sleep*, under which was to be placed the following inscription, “Death is an Eternal Sleep.”

2. Some persons, from motives of poverty or convenience, inter their dead without any ceremony. (1)
3. Children who die before Baptism are not registered, and have no ceremony.
4. Negligence in small Benefices, where the Minister is not resident.
5. Many in Army and Navy die abroad.

But for the purpose of recording the death of individuals, the erection of monuments and tombstones form a very valuable auxiliary, although they are often much exposed to decay and destruction. The monuments and tombstones in and prior to the 16th century were very generally inlaid with brass-plates, on which were engraved figures representing the deceased, with sometimes his widow and children, and underneath, his name and the date of his decease, with other particulars; over these figures were frequently representations of the cross, or some Popish device or ejaculation, such as "Orate pro anima," &c. At, and subsequently to, the reformation, this afforded a pretext for persons to strip them off, and leave nothing but the bare stone, with the matrices or moulds wherein the plates had been, and thus all information from that source was destroyed.

Dr. Berwick, in his *Querela Cantabrigiensis*, notices one of these zealots,

"One who calls himself John" (it should be W<sup>m</sup>) "Dowsing, and by virtue of a pretended Commission, goes about y<sup>e</sup> country like a Bedlam, breaking glasse windows, having battered and beaten downe all our painted glasse, not only in our Chappels, but (contrary to order) in our publique Schools, Colledge Halls, Libraries, and Chambers, mistaking, perhaps, y<sup>e</sup> liberall Artes for Saints (which they intend in time to pull down too) and having (against an order) defaced and digged up y<sup>e</sup> floors of our Chappels, many of which had lien so for two or three hundred years together, not regarding y<sup>e</sup> dust of our founders and predecessors, who likely were

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(1) At Newcastle, more Burials take place in unconsecrated ground called the Ballast Hills, than at the Church and Chapels altogether, and of these no Register is kept.

buried there; compelled us by armed Souldiers to pay forty shillings a Colledge for not mending what he had spoyled and defaced, or forthwith to goe to prison."

This William Dowsing, it appears, kept a Journal of his ecclesiastical exploits. (1) With reference to the Church of Toffe, he says :—

" Will: Disborough Church Warden Richard Basly, and John Newman Cunstable, 27 Superstitious pictures in glass, and ten other in stone, three brass inscriptions, Pray for y<sup>e</sup> Soules, and a Cross to be taken of the Steeple (6<sup>s</sup>. 8<sup>d</sup>.) and there was divers Orate pro Animabus in y<sup>e</sup> windows, and on a Bell, Ora pro Anima Sanctæ Catharinæ."

And as to Trinity Church, Cambridge.

" Trinity Parish, M. Frog Churchwarden December 25, we brake down 80 Popish pictures, and one of Christ and God y<sup>e</sup> Father above."

" At Clare, we brake down 1000 pictures superstitious."

" Cochie, there were divers pictures in the Windows which we could not reach, neither would they help us to raise the ladders."

" 1643, Jan<sup>y</sup> 1, Edwards parish, we digged up the steps, and brake down 40 pictures, and took off ten superstitious inscriptions."

Mr. Cole, in his MSS. observes,

" From this last Entry, we may clearly see to whom we are obliged for the dismantling of almost all the gravestones that had brasses on them, both in town and country : a sacrilegious, sanctified rascal, that was afraid, or too proud, to call it *St. Edward's Church*, but not ashamed to rob the dead of their honours, and the Church of its ornaments.—W. C."

It is not to be wondered that Mr. Cole's wrath should be kindled against this individual, who left in Mr. Cole's native county so many marks of his devastating presence,

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(1) This Journal was published in 1786, in quarto, and may be seen in the British Museum,

and more especially, as monuments, &c. for the dead were excepted in the Act under which this Wm. Dowsing claimed to derive his authority. In that year (1643) one of the Bills proposed to King Charles, at Oxford, by the Lords and Commons, enacts:

“ That all altars and rails be taken away out of Churches and Chapels before April 18, 1643, and that the Communion Table be fixed in some convenient part in the Body of the Church. That all Tapers, Candlesticks, Basons, Crucifixes, Crosses, Images, Pictures of Saints and Superstitious Inscriptions in Churches or Churchyards be taken away or defaced. This act is not to extend to any Image, Picture, or Monument for the Dead.”

But Dowsing was not the only destroyer of monuments, for on the dissolution of Monasteries, the Choir of Atleburgh, in Norfolk, (because it belonged exclusively to a College) was given by the King to Robert, Earl of Sussex, “ who being of a covetous disposition, not only pulled down and spoiled the Chancel, but also pulled up many fair marble gravestones of his ancestors, with monuments of brass upon them, and other fair good pavement, and carried them and laid them for floors in his hall, kitchen, and larder-house,” where they were laying when the account thereof in the Register was taken. The parish churchyard-wall of Tottington, in the same county, is topped with large coffin stones, with crosses of various forms on them; they were formerly laid over the vicars, or other religious persons buried here, and have since been taken from their graves and applied to the present use. The Church of St. Nicholas, at Yarmouth, has many monumental stones, the brasses of which were, in 1551, sent to London to be cast into weights, measures, &c. for the use of the town. But it is not an uncommon practice at the present day to make use of the broken tombstones in paving, &c. and provided they have not been wilfully or negligently destroyed, and the friends of the deceased do not repair them, it may not be an improper use of the fragments. It



is, however, deserving of notice, that in 1809 the Parish of Camberwell advertised for families to repair the old tombstones of their friends, in default of doing which they would be removed altogether.

The following are specimens of remarkable or imperfect Registers:---

Granciter.

"Edwardus Ward Infans, filius Edwardi, cujus Mater cū Ferro inhumanissimæ en interfecit, eodemq. tempore et Instrumento eod. seipsam vita spoliavit. Infans in Cemetrio 10 Maii est sepultus; Mater vero quasi Christiana Sepultura indigna sepulta fuit in Agro 1640."

Little Brickhill,

This Register contains the names of 42 criminals who were executed here between 1561 and 1620, the Assizes being formerly held here.

"Cecely Reves was buried the same day, burned."

St. Peter's, in Cambridge.

"Mr. Thickpenny."

"Mr. Betson."

"Mr. Archer."

All Saints, in Cambridge.

"1714, Bonwick, a Stud: of St. John's Coll: May 9."

St. Benedict, in Cambridge.

"Nephew to my Ldy Newell buried Nov<sup>r</sup> 20, 1581."

"Mr. Hawkins."

"Mr. Burton."

Torporley, in Cheshire.

"Richard Welde Papist & Excommunicate 20. Aug. at night 1626."

## Landbeche.

" 1538, 2 Nov : M. James Hutton, Pryst depted unto God."

" 1539, 31 Aug: Joan, wife of John Sowde, depted owte of this worlde to God."

" 1543, 12 Mar: Syr W<sup>m</sup> Reve Pryste, depted owte of this worlde to the mercy of God."

## Bishop Wearmouth, Durham.

" Marget, a Woman of Sunderland, bur. 2 Dec. 1590.

" John, a Servant fro Farnton Hall, June 20, 1596."

" A woman in the water, 8 Feb', 1596."

" 1631, Dec. 30, John, a child from the Pannes, foresworne of his Father, forsaken of his Mother.

" 1633, Jan: 13, Barbary, a poor wench that came from Suddicke."

" Three men of Hartlepoole, 27 Dec. 1596.

" Jeremy Read, Billingham in Kent, bringer of the plague of which died about thirty persons out of Sunderland, in 3 months, sepult, July 5<sup>th</sup> 1665."

" Elizabeth the wife, Richard the son, and Alice the daughter of Thomas Thornton of Wearmouth. all three burnt to death in his house that day, July 2, 1686."

## Chester le Street, Durham.

" Ellis Thompson, Insipiens('), Gul Lambton Militis, 26 April, 1627,"

## Wickham, Durham.

" A West Countryman, 4 May, 1649."

" A man that was shot bii the Scottish Centres, in the meadows, as he was comeing up the water in a boate, 3 Sept: 1644."

## Bishop Middleham, Durham.

" A poore maide of Cornfourth, having a decease in a legge, buried Maii 20, 1591."

"A peregrine woman dying at Cornforth, was buried here, 9 Jan. 1631."

"A Scotsman and souldier, dying at Cornforth, y<sup>e</sup> souldiers themselves buried him, without any minister, or any prayers over him, y<sup>e</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> November, 1644."

### Hart, Durham.

"Dec<sup>r</sup> 17, 1596, Ellen Thompson Fornicatrix (and then excommunicated) was buried of y<sup>e</sup> people,<sup>(1)</sup> in y<sup>e</sup> chaer at y<sup>e</sup> entrance unto y<sup>e</sup> yeate or stile of y<sup>e</sup> churchyard, on the east thereof."

"Feb<sup>r</sup> 12, 1641, Old Mother Midnight, of Elwick, buried."

### Allhallows, Bread Street, London.

"1643, the 6<sup>th</sup> of October was buried at Lawrence Poultney's, Captain John Jackson. He died at Mr. Gethins of his honourable wounds received at the fight of Newbury. Colonel Harvie, with his regiment of horse attending; his troops, so near as they could to the place of his burial, and others his friends on foot, followed the bier. He died in the faith of the gospel. Received, 16<sup>th</sup> 8<sup>th</sup>."

### - St. Anne's, Blackfriars.

"1579, Aug. 4, John Lacone, infamously buried, for killing himself desperately."

(1) "Quibus non licet dari Ecclesiasticum Sepulturam---publicis excommunicatis majori excommunicatione: Interdictis nomination et iis qui sunt in loco interdicto, eo durante. Se ipsos occidentibus ob desperationem, vel iracundiam (non tamen, si ex insaniam id accidat) nisi ante mortem dederit signa penitentiam. Iis de quibus publicè constat, quod semel in anno non susceperunt sacramenta Confessionis et Communionis in pascha, et absque ullo signo contritionis obierunt. Infantibus mortuis absque baptismo." *Rit. Rom. Ven.*, 1663.

A part of the churchyard was sometimes left unconsecrated, for the purpose of burying excommunicated persons. In Southwark there was formerly a burial ground, called "The Single Woman's Church-Yard," in which were buried the inmates of the licensed stews, who were generally excommunicated.

" 1580, March 21, William, fool to my Lady Jerningham."

" 1594, Robert Halle, servant to Tysse Cutler, who did hang himself, and was buried at the Thames, hard by Blackfriars Bridge."

" 1626-7, Feb. 9, Lady Luson's corpse carried away."

St. Bartholomew, Broad Street.

" 1581, Mr. Francis Bowyer, Alderman, buried in St. Michael's Church; but the solemnities<sup>(1)</sup> of his funeral were ministered in this, the 7 of August."

" Sir Stephen White's Lady."

St. Benedict Fink, London.

" 1542, the 5 May, was buried Thomas Pickerell, a Beadsmen of St. Anthony's.<sup>(2)</sup>

" 1660, On the morning after the fire in Sweetings Alley, July 12, was buried a strange maid out of Edward Barbour's house, being Daughter to one who pretended to be a prophetess, who named herself Mimma Hecres, but would not declare neither her own right name, nor the maid's; yet, the maid being searched by Mrs. Staughton, was found to die of a fever, and so was permitted to be buried."

Hartlepool, Durham.

" 5 Oct. 1673. Tho: Smailes was buried and crowned by a Jury of twelve men, and John Harrison supposed to murder him. John Harrison of Seaton was executed at Durham for murdering Tho. Smailes."

Norton, Durham.

" March 22, 1756, bur: the heart and bowells<sup>(3)</sup> of the right

(1) Q. If these "Solemnities", at the church, did not consist of the Funeral Sermon, with a display of the hearse, adorned with armorial ensigns, &c., probably the wine, wafers, gloves and rosemary were distributed at the same time. Vide p. 110.

(2) St. Anthony's Hospital was formerly situated opposite this church.

(3) An entry of a similar nature will frequently be met with. Where it was

honorable James Earl of Wemyes. The remains was burfed with his Ancestors at Wemys Castle in Scotland, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of April."

Egglescliffe, Durham.

"1639, Henry Nicholson, commonly called Old Harry of Egglescliffe was buried."

"1644, In this year there died of the plauge in this towne, one and twenty people: they are not all buried in the churchyard, and are not in the Register.(1)"

Great Durnford.

"1627. 11 Julii Agneta Cooper Vidua, in Campis."

"28 Julii Arthurus Phippes in clauso ejus."

Sherborne, Dorsetshire.

(Circ: 1536) "William Howel, Hermit of St. John Baptist."

Sproxtton, Leicestershire.

"1768, a Tom' Bedlam, buried Dec: 22."

Loughborough, Ditto.

"1579, Roger Shepherd, Son in Law to Nicholas Wollands, was slain by a lioness which was brought into the town to be seen of such as would give money to see her. He was sore wounded in sundry places, and was buried the 26<sup>th</sup> day of August."

Barwell, Ditto.

"1655, Mr. Gregory Isham, attorney and husbandmen, Oct: 7."

desired to remove the body to a great distance for burial, it was necessary to deprive it of its internals, which were generally buried where the individual happened to die.

(1) The circumstance of persons being buried in the fields, who had died of the plague, will, in many cases, satisfactorily account for the discovery of human bones, in the vicinity of towns and villages. A field at Ealing, where those who died of the plague were buried, is still called Dead Man's Field.



## Misterton, Ditto.

"John— Father of Major— (who was bought off by his Father, after enlisting, and had the meanness and ingratitude to suffer the said Father to be subsisted many years by the parish) was buried at the parish charge, Feb<sup>r</sup> 28, 1784."

## Great Wigston, Ditto.

"1601, Infantula quœdam peregrini Edwardi Paylton, pictoris, nocturno tempore post festum omnium Sanctorum proxime sequente, à parentibus aut ab aliis quibusdam, et cum magno ejus vitæ periculo, inhumanissimè deposita et .... parochianarum sex-centales tantummodo, cujus nomen prorsus ignoramus, more Christiano sepulta fuit 23<sup>o</sup> die Decembris."

"1771, June 15, Jonathan Kiss, a poor boy of Wigston, aged 11, apprentice to Hadan Dan, was buried. He got his death as supposed, by another boy's stamping on his belly, which broke the rim.(')"

## Christchurch, Haats.

"April 14, 1604, Christian Steevens, the wife of Thomas Steevens, was buried in childbirth, and buried by women, for she was a papishè."

## Alrewas.

"1644, Johannes Elison die Dominica 4<sup>o</sup> die Augusti 1644 d'u oves pascit in Campis per Militem pousus et vulnerat in cerebro, ex quo vulnere usque ad sextum diem languebat, et tunc mortem obiit, et septimo die ejusdem sepultus est, et eodem die miles predict. apud Lichfield suspensus est."

## Waterbeche.

"1679, 10 Dec: Francis Wilson, excommunicated, buried in his orchard."

## St. Mary Major, Cambridge.

" 1627, March 13, a boy that was anatomized at the Schools."

## St. Michael's, Cambridge.

" 1573, Father Freer, Feb' 1."

" 1590, Pagrave of Keys, Aug. 20."

" Mr. Bendley of Keis Coll."

" Mr. Bolt of Keis Coll."

" Mr. Bogin of Trin. Coll."

} no dates

## Sandwich.

" John Stokkers loove." (widow)

## Burnham, in Bucks.

" The Queen's Footman's Child, 24 Aug: 1570."

" The Queen's Launder, 3 Nov' 1575."

" Snow's wife, 30 March, 1584."

" A Runagate Wench, 4 Jan', 1587-8."

" Maude the childe of a Roague, 9 May, 1586."

## Chesterton in Cambridgeshire.

1570, Mother Corie was buried, 21 Dec:

## Litlington in Cambridgeshire.

" Roger Storton, buried July 1, 1704, Mortuary paid 10<sup>s</sup>."

## Trinity Parish, Cambridge.

" Dr. Bowlton's cousen was buried in the chancel, July 16, 1693."

## Stathern in Leicestershire.

" 1713, Sarah Trentham, Roberti Uxor, Septimana circiter spatio, nupsit, parturiit, obiit, sepulta est."

## Kensington.

" 1648, A Lieutenant, was shot by William Parr, his name not known, 21<sup>st</sup> December."

## Cotenham.

" 1606, Old M<sup>r</sup> Russell."

" 1625, Mr. Langham."

## Thorrington in Essex.

" A Mayde from the Mill."

" A Tinker of Berye in Suffolk."

" Goodwife Lee, 1719."

In another Parish (mentioned by Mr. Bigland.)

" Black John"

" A Prentice of Mr. Kitford."

## Burham, Kent.

" Mr. Ward buried a man."

## Hokinton.

" 1768, Ric Cole felo de se, buried as such."

## Weedon Beck, Northamptonshire.

" William Radhouse, the elder, dying excom<sup>d</sup>, was buried by stealth, in the night time, in y<sup>e</sup> churchyard, y<sup>e</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> day of January, 1615, whereupon y<sup>e</sup> church was interdicted a fortnight."

## Hokinton.

" Wee, Frances Norris and Anne Stonnaxe, of the Hamlet of Westwick, do make oath, that Matthew Lynton, of Westwick, buried 13 Oct., 1678, was not put in, wrapt up, or wound up or buried, in any shirt, shift, sheet or shroud, made or mingled with

flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or other than what is made of sheeps' wool only; nor in any coffin lined or faced with any cloth, stuff, or any other thing whats', made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, hair, gold or silver, or any other material but sheeps' wool only. Dated 18 Oct: 1678.

Tho' Buck."

Gayton, Northamptonshire.

"1708, M<sup>rs</sup> Dorothy Bellingham was buried April 5<sup>th</sup>, in Linnen, and the forfeiture of the act payd fifty shillings to y<sup>e</sup> informer, and fifty shillings to y<sup>e</sup> poor of y<sup>e</sup> parishe."

The Register of Ramsay, in Huntingdonshire, mentions 400 people who died there of the plague, in or about February 1665, and that it was introduced into the place by a gentleman, who first caught the infection by wearing a coat, the cloth of which came from London: the tailor who made the coat, with all his family, died, as did no less than the number above mentioned.

But the ravages made by the plague in London, about 1665, are well known: it was brought over from Holland, in some Levant goods, about the close of the year 1664: its progress was arrested, in a great degree, by a hard frost which set in, in the winter; but as the spring of 1665 advanced, its virulence advanced. Infected houses were shut up and red crosses painted on the doors, with this inscription, "Lord have mercy upon us." Persons going to market took the meat off the hooks themselves, for their own security, and for the Butchers', dropped their money into pans of vinegar; for it was supposed that even their provisions were tainted with the infection. In the months of August and September the greatest mortality occurred; for the deaths of one week have been estimated at 10,000! It may be supposed, that no great accuracy existed in the Registers, to afford a correct estimate; for, in the parish of Stepney, it is said they lost, within the year, 116 sextons, grave-diggers and their assistants; and, as the disorder

advanced, the churchyards were incapable of holding more bodies, and large pits were therefore dug in several parts, to which the dead were brought by cartloads, collected by the ringing of a bell and the mournful cry of "Bring out your dead." Add to this, that these carts worked in the night, and no exact account was kept, as the clerks and sextons were averse to a duty exposing them to such dangerous consequences, and often themselves were carried off before such accounts as they had taken were delivered in. All the shops were shut up, grass grew in the most public streets, until about December 1665, when the plague abated, and the citizens who had left their abodes for the country, crowded back again to their residences. The computation is, that this horrible disease carried off 100,000 persons in London: it is singular, that the only parish quite exempt from infection was St. John the Evangelist, in Watling Street.

#### Denham.

"Edmundus Peckham, Esq', sonne of S' George Peckham, July 18, 1586. On the same day was the harte of S' Robert Peckham, Knight, buried in the vault under the Chappell."

#### St. Mary's, Reading

Burials.—"1630, Jan. 10, Kathren Roose, apprehended for a wich."

"1631, Aug. 11, Symon Wilkes, Gent'man, executed uppon p' sompson of murder; but he denied it to death."

Sir Edward Clarke, Knight, Steward of Reading, his bowells interred in St. Marie's, his body carried to Dorchester in Oxfordshire, Jan. 11."

#### St. Lawrence, Reading.

Burials.—"1635, A Stranger, choaked while he wished the same"

"1643, Nov. 29, A Soldier.

"Dec. 20, A Captaine's wife, who died at the Lower Shippe."



" Jan. 13, A Soldier."

" 23, A Soldier."

### Selborne.

In the Register of this Parish is a regular entry made, twice, of the funeral of Thomas Cowper, Bishop of Winchester, as if he had been buried at Selborne; yet this learned prelate, who died 1694, was buried at Winchester Cathedral, near the Episcopal Throne.

### Little Marlow, Bucks.

" Mary, the wife of William Borlase, July 18, 1625, a gracious ladye she was, dyed of the plague, as did 18 more."

" Sir William Borlase Sen', died upon Friday, Sept. 4, buried the 10<sup>th</sup>, the celebrating his funeral Oct. 6, 1638."

### West Wycombe, Bucks.

" 1643, Homo occisus et sepultus fuit, Nov. 1."

### Wooburn, Bucks.

" 1700, Cadaver Ed' Thomas, equitis aurati, hic inhumatum fuit vicessimo tertio die Junii."

From " Bigland's Observations" are copied the following entries of burials.

### Burials.

A childe of the Earl of Northum-	Old-Mother Pummell
berland	Mother Studdy
Thomas Rawling's Wife	Gammer Smith
Dorothy Giffard's Daughter	Old Good Wife Lewes
A Londoner's Child	Farmer Browne
A Sucking Child	Tipling Tomlinson
A Child of the Windmill	" The Widow Mitchell from the
Dr. Johnson's Lady	AmesH" (Alms House)
Old Father Beadle	Old Father Eritage

A Nurse Child

"An owl man from the W. H."

Goodwife Goodall

(Workhouse)

Hunstanworth, Durham.

"4 Nov', 1709, Ann, Daughter of James Colling, who was 18 years of age, and never chewed bread, of stature not above a three years old child, the thickest part of her arms and legs not exceeding the thickness of a man's thumb."

Medomsley, Ditto,

"1622, John Stephenson, innocent, buried the 20 December."

Richmond, Yorkshire,

"1705, Buried M<sup>r</sup> Matthew Hutchinson, vicar of Gilling, worth £50 a year."

St. Benedict Fink.

"1673, April 23, was buried M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Sharrow, Cloth-worker, late Churchwarden of this parish, killed by an accidental fall in a vault, in London Wall, Amen Corner, by Paternoster Row, and was supposed had lain there eleven days and nights before any one could tell where he was, *Let all that read this, take heed of drink.*"

St. James's, Clerkenwell.

"1585-6, Feb: 18, M<sup>r</sup> Palmer, Esq:."

"1723, Oct. 1 M<sup>r</sup> Michells brother in law carried to the Chapel (Q: au justè ?)"

St. Giles's, Cripplegate.

"1569, Alls Walsay, a nonne, was buried 3<sup>d</sup> June."

"1604, Feb. 9, William Fox, Son of William Fox, Mynstrell."<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) N. B. A great many Minstrels resided in the parish at this period."

" 1607, June 8, the daughter of Richard Michell, aquavity-man."

" A person was buried this month, accompanied by this note, (from Abbots, a glover) a Quaker will not let it be searched.

St. George's, Hanover Square.

" 19, Henry Boyle Walsingham, C."<sup>(1)</sup>

Allhallows, Thames Street.

" Jan. 20, 1631-2, Richard Clarke, a hopefull gentleman, sonne to Mr Humphry Clarke, deputy of this Ward."

St. Botolph, Bishopsgate.

" 1692, March 27, Ann Lofthouse, aged 35. *Fratrem Soror sequitur quasi cursus æmula; nos utrumque sequamur ad cælos.*"

" 1703, April 17, — — — Son of Sir Orlando Bridgeman, (still born)"

St. Mary, Aldermanbury.

" 1632, Dec. 3 and 15, buried two children of Sir Richard Saltingston's."

Camberwell, Surrey.

" 2 June, 1687, Robert Hern and Elizabeth Bozwell, King and Queen of the Gipsies."

St. Martin's, Ludgate.

" 1616, Feb: 28, was buried an anatomy from the College of Physicians."

St. Leonard, Shoreditch.

" N<sup>o</sup> 20, } Eight persons buried from Thomas Boire's house; viz.,  
1575. } his Wife, two Children, Servants, &c. Oct: 1."

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(1) C, a child under twelve years of age.

The very general terms in which the burial of these individuals (male or female) are recorded, are the more remarkable, as it does not appear that there was any particular sickness or disease prevalent at the time.

Great Carbrook, Norfolk.

1625, Interrog: { *Nata mori cures, simul orta et mortua ? Car heu !*  
                               { *Natalis funis Venter et Urna fuit ?*

Mary, daughter of Edward Cathedral, minister of Carbrook, and Faith his wife, died the 9<sup>th</sup> of August

Respons. { *Muortua nascor, Ego periissem, ni periissem ;*  
                       { *Mifunus, fœnus, Tumulus Alvus erit.*

Tho' in this Book of Death thou bee'st recorded  
 Thy part i' th' Book of Life, thou art awarded.

" 1625, Oct. 23, Mary, wife of Tho. Gaudron, a woman rich in good works and almsdeeds, died.

The Book of life agrees with thy life's story,  
 And by these Bookes thou judged art to glory.

*Mœrens composuit Edwardus Catherall Minister, ut illam memoræ consecraret, et amoris sui superstitem Tessarem relinquat.'*

Morden College, Blackheath.

The Register of the Chapel of this College commences in 1702, and contains the notice of the Burial of all persons upon the foundation; and, whether interred in the Burial Ground attached to the chapel, or elsewhere. The Burial Ground is appropriated for the use of the College, though in the year 1775, the Trustees gave permission for the interment of a gentleman unconnected with the establishment, but who had been a constant attendant and communicant at the Chapel. In the hard frost in 1740, it appears, that no less than eleven of the members died. Before the marriage act, marriages were solemnized in this chapel, the fees for which were divided by the Chaplain of the College, with the Rector of Charlton.

## East Malling, Kent.

" 1722, Feb. y<sup>e</sup> 18, buried Eliz<sup>th</sup> Shepherd, single body."

## Shorne, Kent.

" 1543, Elisabeth Chapman, Gent: "

" 1546, Richard Stevens, found slaine at Gad's Hill foot."

" 1592, Martha Burston, Gent. 31 Decr "

" 1625, Martin Cæsar's Daughter's sonne, nurst at Goodwife Pollard's."

" 1629, Stanton the Fruiterer, his man was buried."

" 1626, A Butcher lying at Widow Brownings."

## Hawsted.

" 1589, *The Funerall* of the Right Worshipfull Sir William Drury, Knight, *was executed* 10 March."

" 1700, M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Cullum, buried 27 Dec. As the said M<sup>r</sup> Cullum was a gentleman, there is 24<sup>s</sup> to be paid for his Buriall."

## Staines, Middlesex.

" M<sup>rs</sup> Tersill and two children  
M<sup>r</sup> Colman  
M<sup>r</sup> Lawrence } buried, Dec. 8.

" All these, and one more, carried into Hampshire, were drowned at New Year's Bridge, in the parish of Staines, Dec. 8, 1768, being passengers in the Exeter coach."

" Buried, March 26, 1791, a man unknown, of some parish in Cambridge, whose death was occasioned and hastened by the improper treatment of William Seymour, farmer of the poor, for which a bill was found against him, and he confined in Newgate a year and a day.

## St. Alkmund's, Derby.

" 1720, buried, Jane Cressop, who was killed by the colo-



quintada, or bitter apple, which she took to procure an abortion. God give others better grace."<sup>(1)</sup>

Stepney.

" William a dumb man, who died in Ratcliffe Highway, buried Sep. 24, 1628, a *fortune teller*."

Teddington.

" James Parsons, who had often eat a shoulder of mutton or a peck of hasty pudding, at a time, which caused his death, buried March 7, 1743-4, aged 36."

Westham.

" April 16, 1690, Peter Paine and his wife, and his son Peter, and the parson and his maid, was blown up all in one day."<sup>(2)</sup>

Herne, Kent, and Hinckley, Leicestershire.

" 1567, Ould Arnold, a Crysome, buried February 8."

" 1583, Agnes filia Bartholomœi fornicatoris, bapt. 26 Jan.:"

" 1627, one Crysome, base, of Rebakca Dunning, March 16."

Dr. Johnson defines "Chrisom" to be a child that dies within a month after its birth. The above entry must record the burial of a child of "Ould Arnold," it being very common, at that period, to baptise "to John Smith a daughter," or to bury "William Adams, *his* son," &c. &c.

(1) In the Burial Register of Boxley in Kent, are added, for a considerable period, the diseases of which the persons died, and some of them are stated very particularly. The practice of stating the disease, in the Register of Burial, is recommended by Dr. Burrows, in his "Strictures on the use and defects of Parish Registers, 1818."

(2) This was an accident by gunpowder.

## Great Paunton.

1632, M<sup>rs</sup> Eleanor Ayscough, aged 114, she could remember the finishing the tower, buried March 10."

"Mem: our tower was builded from the ground by M<sup>r</sup> Ellys, merchant of the Staple."

## St. Mary's, Lichfield.

"June 28, 1574, Alicia Milne, seipsam suspendebat."

## St. Michael, Ditto.

"Margarett, who kyld herselfe with a knyafe, was buried 15 June, 1603."

"Dec. 1, 1632, Andrew, the sonne of William Burnes, buried, *with a coffin.*"<sup>(1)</sup>

"May 12, 1722, John Yates, an Oxford Scholar, travelling homeward,"

## Totteridge.

"March 2<sup>d</sup>, 1802, buried Elizabeth King, widow, for 46 years clerk of this parish, in the 91<sup>st</sup> year of her age, who died at Whetstone, in the Parish of Finchley, Middlesex, Feb<sup>r</sup> 24<sup>th</sup>. N. B. This old woman, as long as she was able to attend, did constantly, and read on the prayer-days, with great strength and pleasure to

(1) So lately as in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was the custom to bury merely in a winding sheet, without any coffin, as now in use; and at a much later period it was the fashion to provide wafers, &c., at funerals; thus, in the obituary of Richard Smith: he says, "Jan<sup>r</sup> 2, 1671, died M<sup>r</sup> Cornelius Bee, buried 4 January, at S. Bartholomew's, without sermon, without wine or wafers; onely gloves and rosemary."

And in the Parish Register of Bruton is the following:

"1668, June 6, The R<sup>t</sup> Honor<sup>ble</sup> Charles Lord Viscount Fitz Harding was, between 12 and one of the clock in the night, after a sermon preached by M<sup>r</sup> John Randall then Minister of Brewton, buried in the vault in the Chancell, in a coffin of lead."

the hearers, though not in the clerk's place; the desk being filled on the Sunday by her son-in-law Benjamin Withall, who did his best."

### Peterborough.

"1578, February, Thomas Talbot, the singing man, was buried the vi day, and was stricken by death very sodaynly and strangely."

"1587, August, the Queene of Scots was most sumptuously buried in the cathedral church of Peterburgh, the first day of August, who was for her deserts beheaded at Fotheringay, about St. Pauls day before."

"Anthony More, one of the children of the Queen's Maties Kitchen w<sup>th</sup> followed at the Funerall aforesaid of the Queen of Scots was buried the iii day."

"1592, September, William, that was slayne with a mast of a Kell was buried the xix day."

"1606, September, Michael Pickeryng, gentilman, was slayne by John Morton, Gent. in a chaRenge near Borough Berry, and was buried the 23 day."

"1606, December, Henry Renoulds was buried the 16 day."  
(In the margin) "Henry Renoulds came from London where he dwelt, sicke of the plague and being receyved by William Browne, died in his house, the said William soon after fell sicke of the plague and died, so did his sonne, his daughter, and his servant; only his wyfe and her mayde escaped with Soars. The plague brought by this means to Peterburgh continued there till September following."

"1611, January, Bartholomew Barnabye, an ould Faulkener, buried the 5 day, above an hundred years old."

"1613, Novemb., Mistres Luce Hacke, the Wyffe of M<sup>r</sup> William Hacke a gentlewoman of good presence, yet not quozed, of a sharpe and quick apprehension, yet no Scoffer; personable and full of favour, yet most chaste, died in childbed the 24 of this present, and was buried at Wytlessey, the 25<sup>th</sup> daye, whose death was much lamented in Peterbor :

Juno, Minerva, Venus, terræ tria Numina quondam  
Unice pro tribus his elucet nostra Lucya."

## Chart, next Sutton Vallence..

" 1648, Joseph, the son of Thomas Daye and An his wife, who was wounded at Maydston fight,<sup>(1)</sup> 1<sup>o</sup> Junij, was buried the eleventh day of June."

Tho: B ..... dying excommunicat was bury'd with out y<sup>e</sup> service of y<sup>e</sup> church, January y<sup>e</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 1694."

Staplehurst, Kent.<sup>(1)</sup>

" The iij daye of March, 1539, there was buried one John Howtheland, syngilman."

" Ther was buried John Joyse, by occupacyon, mason."

" Ther was buried John Turner thelder, whose sowle Jesu pardon Ame."

" Ther was buried thee sonn off Thomas Roberts the youngar, called Henry uppo whose sowle I py God have mcy."

" There was buried the honest wyffe of Peter Dran, full of almes and good workes whose name was Alyce."

" There was buried Robert Swan and Ann Brydge, Wedow, poore folkes bothe."

" 1546, There was buried Richard the So of Hery Malyns, which bego to lerne rede, whose Soll Jhv. pdo."

" 1548, There was buried Jamis Brageland, an honest ma and a goode householder who soule Jhv pardo. and brig. to eternal rest."

" 1563, There was buried Alyce Wattes, wydow of the Pyse of Goudherst, who was betroughted to Thomas Batherst, of this Pyse, Clothier."

" 1556, 16<sup>o</sup> Junii tumulabat' Johannes Dynknall."

" 17 Nov : humatu corpus Stephani Aste."

" 4<sup>o</sup> Maii Sepeliebat' Joana Tomset pva Nichi Nubery."

" 6<sup>o</sup> Sept: Mandabat terræ corpus Eleonere Hylls vidue."

(1) Between Lord Fairfax and the Kentish Forces.

(2) The Register of this parish is in excellent preservation, it commences in 1538, and contains much curious matter.

" 30 Junii, the chylde of God<sup>(1)</sup> filius Ricd. Stacy."

" Octavo Febr obiit Joanna Taylor sine sacramentor receptor et crucis signo sup corpus vel sarcophagn quo deputabat nil duodecima et pena hora nulla satisfactione facta."<sup>(2)</sup>

" 9<sup>o</sup> Febr. obiit Thoms Fuller filius Willi sine crucis signo sup sarcopha."

" 13<sup>o</sup> Febr. obiit Lawrence Austrey more ecclastico in..... deportatus."

" Obiit James Lede deportatus sine crucis signo et introduche in templu no admissus lege Divinia neq. Regia.....more ecclastico."

" 14<sup>o</sup> Febr. obiit Henricus Bede cuius pr noluit eu in ecclia introduce."

" 21<sup>o</sup> obiit Robert Willerd, shomaker, sine crucis nihil."

" Eodem obiit Isbell Berry sine crucis signo."

" Obiit Stevyn Austrey, nihil solut ne denario quidm un sal. sepultus horæ prima in qua hora m....ter expectabat."

" Ultio Febr obiit Margaret Byshop obstetrix, nihil soluto."

" 1550, the v<sup>th</sup> day of November, Ther was buried Creature, the daughter of Agnes Mathews, synge woman, the seconde childe."

" 1562, ther was buryed, Pnell Startby, a synple wenche."

" 1591, the iij of Februarye was buryed an harlott namyd Anys Hynge."

(1) This has been said to mean an illegitimate child; but it is more probable that it was a chrysom. Had it been the former, the child's Christian name would have been mentioned.

(2) I have been unable to explain the meaning of these and the seven following extracts: the date of the year is not inserted in the Register; but in the margin there appears the following memorandum, inserted subsequently to the entries:—" 10<sup>th</sup> of Elis." They have no doubt a reference to some ceremony of the Roman Catholic Church; though a Bishop of that church observes, " that they can hardly be referred to the time of Queen Mary, as they are not in the usual style of the Catholic Church, nor conformable to the Rubrics of the Catholic Rituals of that period."

The Rituale has the following direction in the Burial Service:

" Et aqua benedicta ad locum ubi sepeliendus est mortuus et signo crucis signet locum et postea aspergat aqua benedicta Deinde accipiat Sacerdos fossorium vel aliud instrumentum et aperiat terram in modum crucis ad longitudinem et latitudinem corporis defuncti, dicens.---"

And in another place:---

" Finitis Orationibus executor officii terram super corpus ad modum crucis ponat et corpus thurificet et aqua, &c."



" 1568, there was buryed Alyce the Wiff of (a naughtie fellow whose name is) Mathew Manne."

" 17 June, 1569, There was buried Wyllyam Willes, a housholder, who was by misfortune kylled withe the Whyle of his owne Weyne."

" 1624, was buryed Thomas Bedford, a travayling Shoomaker, borne at Sane in Wilsheare."

" 1624, buryed y<sup>e</sup> weedow of James Joiles whitch lay beethred seven yeeres (which in Queen Marie's dayes fled with her father and mother beyond sea, for fear of the persecution that was then for the truth.)"

#### Etton.

" 1617, A Daughter borne to John Wallas, of Woodcroft, and buried Ap<sup>r</sup> 23. Sine nomine, as St. Jerome said of David's child, that is, sine circumcissione, as this, sine baptismate."

#### Helmsley.

The Duke of Buckingham, who succeeded the Duke who was assassinated by Felton, is buried here, and is thus noticed in the Register:

" Burials 1687 April 17<sup>th</sup> Georges vilas Lord dooke of bookingham."

#### Brentford, Middlesex.

" Captaine Preston and an other Captaine, Richard Storie leftenant and leftenant Daniell, John Whitaker, Richard Alderton, and divers others which weare slaine on the King's party, Nov<sup>r</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> 1642."

" December, Thomas Wade, a Soldier from Sharpe's, the 10<sup>th</sup>; Leftenant Court, Richard Mills and others, one y<sup>e</sup> parle . . . . ."

#### Eton, Berks.

" 1647, Jan. 28, Rich<sup>d</sup> Wright and his sucking daughter."

" 1730 Mar. 6, M<sup>r</sup> Edw<sup>d</sup> Cockran Scholar, murder'd by Thomas Dalton his Schoolfellow (w<sup>o</sup> stabb'd him w<sup>th</sup> a penknife) "

## Eastwell, Kent.

The Register of this Parish (beginning 1538) is "a beautiful and curious book." It contains the Protestation, dated February 23d, 1642, signed by 29 persons; the Vow and Covenant of 1643, signed by 32 persons; and the Solemn League and Covenant, dated February 25, 1643, signed by 19 persons. It has also an Entry of the Burial of Richard Plantagenet—

"Anno domini 1550.

"✓ Rychard Plantagenet was buried the 22<sup>th</sup> daye of December Anno ut supra." (1)

## Cranbrook, Kent, (1559).

"In this year following, 1597, began the great plague in Cranbrook, the which continued from April the y<sup>e</sup> afs<sup>d</sup> to July 13, 1598. 1st, it was observed that before this infection that God, about a year or two before, took away by death many honest and good men and women. 2. That the judgment of God for sin was much before threatened, especially for that vice of Drunkenness which abounded here. 3. That this infection was in all quarters of this Parish except Hartly quarter. 4. That the same begun in the house of one Brighteling, out of which much theiving was committed, and that it ended in the House of one Henry Grynnoock, who was a pott companion, and his wife noted much for incontinence, which both died excommunicated. 5. That this infection gott almost into all the Inns and Suckling Houses of the Town, places then of much disorder, so that God did seem to punish that

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(1) The mark ✓ occurs before every subsequent entry in the old Register where the person recorded was of noble blood. A Letter from Dr. Brett to Dr. W. Warren, published in Peck's *Desiderata Cur.* vol. ii. lib. vii. p. 249, contains a long account of this individual, who appears to have been chief bricklayer to Sir Thomas Moyle, when he built Eastwell Place, and who learnt that trade immediately after the battle of Bosworth Field, on the eve of which he had an interview with Richard the Third, who acknowledged him as his son, and directed him, if the victory was on his side to come to Court, if on the contrary side, to keep his parentage a secret.

Since writing the above, "The last of the Plantagenets" has been published, founded on the history of this individual.

himself which others did neglect and not regard. 6. Together with this infection there was a great dearth at the same time, which was cause also of much wailing and sorrow. 7. This was most grievous unto me of all, that this judgment of God did not draw people unto repentance the more, but that many by it seemed the more hardened in their Sin."

"Now also this year others of the plague who were buried near to their several dwellings, because they could get none to carry them into the Church, for it was the beginning of this infection, so that none would venture themselves. The certain day of their burials one could not learn."

## CHAPTER VII.

## OF THE REGISTERS OF MARRIAGES.

OF the several Registers of Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, that of Marriages is considered to be the most perfect; and this may, in some degree, be attributed to the circumstance of the ceremony being of more *temporal* importance to the parties, and to the existence of an impression with the contracting parties, that the Marriage was not completed, until an entry was made by the officiating clergyman that the ceremony had been performed. In addition to this, the Marriages of all Dissenters are solemnized in the Church of England, although they may baptize and bury, after their own forms, in their own chapels. The Quakers, however, must be excepted, as they are permitted to perform the ceremony, after their own fashion, in their congregations. The Jews also solemnize their Marriages with their peculiar ceremonies.

Marriages by English parties in Scotland are generally again performed in the Church of England, as also are those which take place in foreign countries.

For upwards of half a century prior to the year 1754, an abuse of a very pernicious kind, was permitted to exist in London, namely, the performance of the Marriage Ceremony by clergymen residing within the Fleet Prison, or the rules, and generally confined for debt; and which Marriages are now commonly known by the appellation of "Fleet Marriages." But the evil was not confined to the Fleet,

for at Mr. Keith's chapel, in May Fair,<sup>(1)</sup> (an unlicensed chapel) clandestine Marriages were solemnized to a very great extent; so much so, that it is said 6000 Marriages took place in one year; and that, in one day, he married 173 couple; and that, on the 25th of March 1754, (the day before the act came into operation) before eleven o'clock, 45 couple were married; and when he ceased, nearly 100 pair had been joined together, two men being constantly and closely employed in filling up licenses for that purpose. Many persons of rank and title were thus married.

The following is an extract from the Gentleman's Magazine for February 1735, copied by that work from the Grub Street Journal.

"A female correspondent, who signs, 'Virtuous,' complains of the many ruinous marriages that are every year practised in the Fleet, by a set of drunken swearing parsons, with their myrmidons, that wear black coats, and pretend to be clerks and registers to the Fleet, plying about Ludgate Hill, pulling and forcing people to some peddling alehouse, or brandy shop, to be married, even on Sunday stopping them as they go to church. Not long since, a young lady was deluded and forced from her friends, and, by the assistance of a very wicked swearing parson, married to an atheistical wretch, whose life is a continual practice of all manner of vice and debauchery. Another young lady was decoyed to a house in the confines of the Fleet, by a pretended clergyman. D' Wryneck immediately appeared, and swore she should be married, or if she would not, he would have his fee, and register the marriage from that night; the lady, to recover her liberty, left her ring as a pledge that she would meet him the morrow night."

In a "Letter to the Public," published in 1753, the writer says of these Marriages:—

"We know that the several dealers vie with each other, who

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(1) It appears that this Keith had a little chapel in the Fleet Prison, where, in one year, he married thousands, while the rector of St. Ann's, a large and populous parish, married but fifty within the same period.



shall draw most customers, giving public notice, by all manner of ways, where weddings may be had, without loss of time, hindrance of business, or knowledge of friends."

The following advertisement is to be met with in the Daily Advertiser of the 1st of January 1753, which tends to confirm the assertion of the writer just quoted.

" Mr Keith's chapel, in May Fair, Park Corner, where the marriages are performed, by virtue of a license on a crown stamp, and certificate, for a guinea, is opposite to the Great Chapel, and within ten yards of it. The way to the chapel is through Piccadilly, by the end of St. James's Street, down Clarges Street, and turn on the left hand."

In addition to this, it is stated,<sup>(1)</sup> that every second or third house, in one of the most frequented parts of London, was devoted to this abuse of matrimony; not privately transacted, but signs hung out; and over the doors of many of these houses were "*Marriages done here,*" while at others, worriers were employed to seduce the unwary passenger with, "*Do you want a Parson?*" "*Will you be married?*"

Several of the Registers of Marriages in the Fleet, May Fair, and Mint, were purchased, a few years since, by Government, from an individual, and are now deposited in the Bishop of London's Registry Office, Doctor's Commons:<sup>(2)</sup> they commence in 1682, and end in 1754; and consist of five volumes prior to 1700, and of 154 from thence to 1754. The books are of paper, and in good preservation, but seldom filled, each clergyman having a separate Register. The entries in many of them are clear and well written, con-

(1) Sir Tanfield Leman's Letter to Lord Holderness.

(2) The Law List, in its List of Public Offices, formerly included a "Register containing Marriages in the Fleet, May Fair, and Mint, in Rutland House, Charter-House Square;" but, within the last three years, it has discontinued noticing this Registry. I have not been able to find such an office now existing, although I have made numerous enquiries, and have therefore no doubt that the Registers alluded to are those at the Bishop of London's office.

taining the names, description, and, sometimes, residence of the parties, with annexation of bachelor, widower, spinster, or widow: they are signed by the clergyman, but not by the contracting parties. The Mint Register comprises only the period from 1718 to 1725.

The Keith Chapel Registers are deposited with the Parochial Registers of St. George, Hanover Square: they consist of three folio volumes, closely and clearly written, the Marriages being numbered to prevent interlineation. They commence about 1735, and end March 24th, 1754,

There was also a chapel in the parish of Hampstead, called Sion Chapel,(1) which was much resorted to for the purpose of private Marriages. It appears to have belonged to the keeper of an adjoining tavern, who, in advertisements inserted in the newspapers, held forth various temptations to induce the public to patronise *both* his establishments. The following are two of those advertisements:—

“As there are many weddings at Sion Chapel, Hampstead, five shillings only is required for all the church fees of any couple that are married there, provided they bring with them a license or certificate, according to the act of parliament. Two sermons are continued to be preached in the said chapel every Sunday, and the place will be given to any clergyman that is willing to accept of it, if he be approved of.”

Postboy, April 18, 1710,

“Sion Chapel, at Hampstead, being a private and pleasant place, many persons of the best fashion have lately been married there. Now as a minister is obliged constantly to attend, this is to give notice, that all persons, upon bringing a license, and who shall have their wedding dinner in the gardens, may be married in the said Chapel, without giving any fee or reward whatsoever; and such as do not keep their wedding dinner in the gardens, only five shillings will be demanded of them for all fees.”

Read's Weekly Journal, Sept. 8, 1716.

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(1) Quere. Was this the present chapel in Well Walk, or did it stand on the scite of it? The inscription on the bell of the present chapel is “The Gift of Joseph Rous Esq. and Wm. Wood Esq. to the New Chapel in Hampstead, 1725.” Was any Register kept?

A Register of the Chapel Royal, St. James's, commencing in 1675, is with the Fleet Register Books at the Bishop of London's; it appears to have been kept by Marmaduke Alford, who was appointed Yeoman of the Vestry in that year. The contents are chiefly Registers of Marriages, although there are a few entries of Baptism, &c. and copies of "Orders for his Majesty's Chapell." Amongst the Marriages are the following.—

"Feb. 24, 1676, S<sup>r</sup> Christopher Wren,<sup>(1)</sup> and Madam Jane Fits-williams were married by D<sup>r</sup> William Holder, Sub-dean."

"July 28, 1683, Prince George of Denmark, and the Lady Anne, his R<sup>h</sup> Highness's Daughter were married at St. James's, by the Lord B<sup>p</sup> of London."

"Aprill the 14<sup>th</sup>, 1703, William Rich, (servant to a coffee-man) and Jane Vincent (both of St. Saviour's Parish, Southwark) were married in y<sup>e</sup> Chappell Royall in Whitehall, by M<sup>r</sup> John Radcliffe, Confessor."

#### Fleet Registers.<sup>(2)</sup>

"September y<sup>e</sup> 11<sup>th</sup>, 1745.

Edw<sup>d</sup>

and Elizab<sup>th</sup>

were married and would not let me know their names, y<sup>e</sup> man said he was a weaver and liv'd in Bandylegwalk, in the Borough.

P<sup>r</sup> E. Ashwell."

(1) The Architect.

(2) Besides these Registers, the Bishop has a very great number of small pocket books used by the Fleet parsons, and which, it appears, they were in the habit of carrying about with them, to the different public houses where Marriages were to be done, and making the entries therein, and afterwards transcribing them into the larger Register.

By these pocket books, and also by the Registers, it appears, that a very large proportion of the persons married were brought by watermen, who were at that time, in as much requisition by the public, for the conveyance of parties from one part of London to another, as the hackney coachmen are at present.

After the entries of Marriages, the remarks of the clergyman are often to be met with; as a specimen of them, are the following—

"Jn<sup>o</sup> Todd of St. John's Wapping at King Edw<sup>ds</sup> Staires waterman, a friendly adviser and director to y<sup>e</sup> Fleet for Marriages."

" April y<sup>e</sup> 21<sup>st</sup>, 1735.

Nicolas Cole, Weaver and Blindman, of St. Mary Over, and Anne Wright Blindwoman."

" Marmaduke Gresham Kn<sup>t</sup> and Barronet of Limplfield, in the County of Surrey and (1) ————— Nov<sup>r</sup> 27, 1724."

" Sep<sup>r</sup> 20 1736, John Bennett Turner of St. Clem<sup>t</sup> Danes, and Barbara Munden Batch<sup>r</sup> and Sp<sup>r</sup>.

He a little old man about 60 years } Domi  
of age and very effeminate in his voice } Silk Clark."

" Sept<sup>r</sup> the 8<sup>th</sup>, John Fletcher of the Parish of St. Mary's, Oxon. Ba. and Gent., and Mary Gardner, of the Pa. of Fulham, Hammersmith, Spinater, att the Goat, (2) Phillips's, the 6<sup>th</sup>.

John Flood."

This was a Gentleman, Gayman refused to marry. By reason of his being student att Oxford, and knowing his father."

" June 18, 1728, Edward son to Edward and Arabella Turner, christned at Bunch of Grapes. (3)

" N. B. they had liv<sup>d</sup> together 4 years as man and wife : they were so vile as to ask for a Certifycate to be antidated."

" Quarrelsome people."

" N. B. they wanted an antidate from 45 to 41."

" N. B. Both y<sup>e</sup> man and woman were exceedingly vile in their behaviour."

" N. B. the woman was big w<sup>th</sup> child, and they wanted a Certifycate antidated ; and because it was not comply'd with, they were abusive w<sup>th</sup> a Witness."

" N. B. the person belonging to y<sup>e</sup> house aloud me only 2<sup>d</sup> out of 8<sup>d</sup>."

" 4..0 — 2..6 — p<sup>d</sup> 3.. 0 Waterman."

" 5..0 — 1..0 — p<sup>d</sup> 1.. 0 Howell."

(About 4s. or 5s. appears to have been the clergyman's fee, and 1s. or 2s. the clerk's. Out of these, an allowance was made to the persons who brought the parties to be married.)

" Had a noise for foure hours about the money."

" N. B. Stole a silver spoon."

" Stole my clothes brush."

" The person whoe was with them I believe knew it to be a made marriage."

" Davis and Wyatt brought the others, and were very abusive to M<sup>r</sup> Ashwell. I absent, and went and left a pott of 4 penny to pay."

" Her eyes very black, and he beat about y<sup>e</sup> face very much."

" The woman ran across Ludgate Hill in her shift. 10<sup>e</sup> 6<sup>d</sup>."

(1) No name.

(2) The name of the public house where the Marriage ceremony was performed."

(3) There are many entries of Christenings interspersed with the Marriages."

" 1728, Joseph South, of the parish of Deptford in Kent, and Eliz. Durham of the same place Ba. and Sp., married at a Cook-shop, next the Yorkshire Gray, at the house of John Warminger."

" These wicked people came this day; Peter Oliver of St. Olaves Carpenter, and Elisabeth Overton B. and W would have a certificate dated in 1729, or would not be married if it was to be dated to this time—went to Lilley's and was married."<sup>(1)</sup>

" This 31<sup>st</sup> of May came a man and a wooman to be married at M<sup>r</sup> Levi's. Gave M<sup>r</sup> Ashwell 8<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup>: he would have 5<sup>s</sup> 0<sup>d</sup> all; but they abusied him, and all persons there went to — Bates or M<sup>r</sup> Dare's, and gave 6<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup> and was married, which was nine shillings, when they might been done cheaper"

" N. B. A coachman came and was half married, and would give but 3<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup> and went off."

" 1741, Walter Turner, of St. Ann's, Soho, B<sup>t</sup>, and Sarah Sysam, appear'd to be a vile design'd skeme, as I afterwards discovered."

" 13 Sept. Edw<sup>d</sup> Emmet Gent. of Barkin in Essex B and Hannah Bowle, D<sup>o</sup> Sp. Castle Tavern Paternoster Row, M<sup>r</sup> Burnford's Weding. W. 2 guineas, M. 1 guinea, was to be secret for a month."

#### Register of the Mint.

" Mark Brett  
and Dorothy Chanwood. } April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1719."

" 1724, Oct<sup>r</sup> 5, Garvis King of Chivening Kent, and Eliz. Harinden of the same."

Charles Dudley, the titular Duke of Northumberland, was found guilty, in 1658, of forging an Entry of Marriage in the Register Book of East Greenwich, in Kent, and was fined 200 marks. The Dictum of Chief Justice Glyn, on that occasion, as recorded in Siderfin's Reports, part 2, page 71, is, in the language of that day, as follows :—

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(1) There can be little doubt, that the entries of Marriages were, for a sufficient consideration, antedated. This entry, and the frequent application for antedated, puts it almost beyond doubt.



" Glyn, Chief Justice. Un Register Book pur l'entry del Marriage, Births, &c. est un evidence per nostre Ley et le falsifying de ceo soit il per conspiraey ou nemy ne doit estre unpunished."

The following are specimens of singular Entries of Marriages:—

Landbeche.

" 1540, 27 Nov', John Clarke and Mary Peon were cowpled together in matrimony."

Harestone, in Leicestershire.

" Francis Swift and Elizabeth Orme were three several Sundays published in the parish church of Harestone, and afterwards, on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April, 1654, their Marriage (according to the late act of the *House of Commons*, in that case made) was solemnized and consummated, by and before M<sup>r</sup> Thomas Miller, Alderman of Grantham and Justice of the Peace there."

In this entry the words, " House of Commons" have been since substituted for the word " Parliament."

In Lincolns Inn Chapel Register.

" This day were married, by M<sup>r</sup> Holloway, a couple whose names I could never learn, for he allowed them to carry away the Licence."

Thorrington in Essex.

" M<sup>rs</sup>. Forgotten until now, that Edmund Denmark and Alicè Smyth were married the 24<sup>th</sup> of May, 1584."

Wrotham, Kent.(<sup>1</sup>)

" 1710 Ap<sup>l</sup> 10, James Stiddolph of Chattam (Barber Surgeon) and Mary Baker of East Maling Spinster, were married."

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(1) This Register mentions, about 1588, the names of Randall a Boothe and James a Pen.

## Shorne, near Rochester, Kent.

" 1561, George Page, Gent<sup>a</sup>, was married to Isbell Then, y<sup>e</sup>  
26 of April, at *Towne Maling*."

## Tunstall, Kent.

" W<sup>m</sup> Cromer, Esq<sup>r</sup> and Elizabeth Gildeford, da. of S<sup>r</sup> John  
K<sup>t</sup> married at *Boughton Mallarde*, 1 Octob."

In the Parish Register of Hokington, for a period of  
upwards of forty years, the entries of Marriage were made  
without mentioning the wife's name, and sometimes with-  
out the date, thus—

## Marriages.

" Antony Wayman, 29 June."

" John Frevill, 30 Octob."

" Richard Gam, 2 Nov."

" Tho. Hopking."

" Tho. Frewell."

" Robert Cole, 30 Oct."

And at St. Bridget's, Chester, thus:—

" Will<sup>m</sup> Washington, wedded 5 Feb., 1560."

In an old vellum Register, of the Parish of Cottenham,  
is the following triplet of the times when Matrimony  
should be solemnized.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) From an almanack called "*Galen*," published for the year 1642, is the  
following:—

" Times prohibiting Marriage this year.

" From the 27 of November till January 13.

From Februarie 6 untill April 18.

From May 16 untill June 5.

" Conjugiu adventus phibet, Hilariq relaxat ;  
Septuagena vetat, sed paschæ octava remittet,  
Rogamen vetitat, concedit Trina potestas."

Twickenham, Middlesex.

" Christopher Mitchel and Anne Colcot, married June 4, 1665 by permission of Sir Richard Chaworth, it being within the octaves of Pentecost." (1)

Rotterdam, Holland.

" Jean Quarles, bachelier ne' a Londres, demeure a Delft avec Petronella van Berchell, demoiselle de Rotterdam, ayant eu leur trois annonces de mariages sans aucun empechement legitime, sont publiquement dans l'église de Rotterdam, investé dans le saint état de mariage le 31 Octobre, 1628.

Johannes Wilhelmins  
Eccle<sup>a</sup> Rottrod."

Register of———

" Thomas Speller, a dumb person, by trade a Smith of Halfeld Broadoake, in the county of Essex, and Sarah Earle, daughter to one John Earle of Great Paringdon, in the same county yeoman, were married by licence, granted by D<sup>r</sup> Edwards, Chancellor of the Dioces of London, the seventh day of November, anno Dni, 1618, which licence aforesaid was granted at the request of Sir Francis Barrington, Knight, and others of the place abovenamed, who, by their letters certified M<sup>r</sup> Chancellor, that the parents of either of them, had given their consents to the said marriage ; and the said Thomas Speller the dumb parties willingness to have the same performed, appeared, by taking the Book of Common Prayer and his licence in one hand, and his Bride in the other, and coming to M<sup>r</sup> John Briggs, our minister and preacher, and made the best

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(1) It was formerly customary to preach a Wedding Sermon. One of these was published in 1742, as preached at a Wedding, at Driffield, in Gloucestershire. The Marriage Psalm, on the first Sunday of the couple's appearance at church, still remains.

signs he could, to shew that he was willing to be married, which was then performed accordinglie. And also the said Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, as M<sup>r</sup> Briggs was informed, was made acquainted with the said Marriage before it was solemnized, and allowed it to be lawful. This Marriage is set down at large, because we never had the like before."

Bermondsey, Surrey.

"James Herriott, Esq<sup>r</sup> and Elizabeth Josey, Gent. were married Jan. 4, 1624-5. N. B. This James Herriott was one of the 40 children of his father a Scotchman."

The Marriages in the Parish of Dale Abbey were, till a few years previous to the Marriage Act, solemnized by the clerk of the Parish, at one shilling each, there being no minister.

The entry of the Marriage of Oliver Cromwell's Daughter, in the Register of St. Martin's in the Fields, is thus:—

"November 11, 1657,

These are to certifie whom it may concerne, that according to a late Act of Parliament, entytuled an Act touching Marriages, and the registering thereof &c. Publication was made in the publique meeting place, in the Parish Church of the Parish of Martins in the Fields in the county of Middlesex, upon three several Lord's Days, at the close of the morning exercise, namely upon the xxv day of October m<sup>d</sup>clvii, as alsoe upon the i and viii day of November following, of a Marriage agreed upon between the Honorable Robert Rich of Andrews Holborne, and the Right Honorable the Lady Frances Cromwell, of Martins in the Fields in the county of Middlesex. All which was fully performed according to the act, without exception.

"In witnesse whereof I have hereunto set my hand the ix day of November, m<sup>d</sup>clvii.

William Williams,  
Register of the Parish of Martins in the Fields."

Then follows, in the hand of Henry Scobell.

" Married, xi Novemb., MDCLVII. in the presence of His Highness the Lord Protector, the Right Honble the Earls of Warwick and Newport, (Robert Rich and Mountjoy Blount) Robert Lord Rich, the Lord Strickland. and many other."

It is worthy of remark, how studiously the very name of a *Saint* is avoided in proceedings of that day, the parishes being only called " Martins" and " Andrews."

At St. Botolph Aldgate, the Register contains the following entry.—

" Michell Didyer, a stranger, born at Marseilles in Provence, a pilot under M<sup>r</sup> Candish in his voyage to the South Endyes, and Jaquete Desbeaz, a maiden born in Jersey, married 2 November, 1588,"

Great Wigston.

Doctissimus Thomas Bankes, ecclessiæ Litterworthensis Rector, and Elizabetha Hebbe, *alligati fuerunt*."

Christ-Church, Hants. In this Register, under the year 1659, is the following entry, alluding to the form of Marriages enjoined by Oliver Cromwell's Act, in 1653.

" All following to 1661, and many years before, weare married by M<sup>r</sup> Warner, in the *Presbytering* way.

Drayton Basset.

" 1653 the 18<sup>th</sup> daye of May was married the right worshipful Maister Simon Harecourt of Raunton Esquiare, and the Right Worshipful Grace Robinson."

Framlingham.

" The daies of publication of Marriage betwene Philip Fuller



and Elizabeth Bucknham, both single folkes, of Woodbridge, weare, the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, and the 6<sup>th</sup>, and the 13<sup>th</sup> of September, 1656, and weare married there, by on of the 2 Bales of Ipsh, the 29 of Septem. 1656."

St. Benedict Fink, London.

" 1662, Feb. 24, was married a Doctor of Divinity, named D' Princ, Chaplain to the Duke of Abemarle, by D' William Burstall, which could not be (he said) registered, but it was with licence."

St. Giles, Cripplegate.

" 1620, Aug. 22, Oliver Cromwell<sup>(1)</sup> and Elizabeth Boucher."

Elvetham, Hants.

" 1654, I, A B, do here in the presence of God, the Searcher of all hearts, take thee C D for my wedded wife, and doe, also in the presence of God, promise unto thee to be a loving and a faithful husband. Thomas Patrick of Hartley Witney, and Lucie Watts of Elvetham, were married before Robert Reynolds Esq<sup>r</sup>, in the presence of Ambrose Iver and Thomas Townsend, March 16 1654, Robert Reynolds, Justice of the Peace."<sup>(2)</sup>

Hawsted.

" 1710, Sir Dudley Cullum Bart. Widower, and M<sup>rs</sup><sup>(3)</sup> Anne Wicks, single woman, both of this parish, were married 12 June."

" William Cawstone and Mary Baldwin of this parish, were

(1) This is the Protector, who was married in this church, which was then in the neighbourhood of many Noblemen's mansions.

(2) Cromwell's Act directed Marriages to be solemnized before a Justice of the Peace, which for several years after 1653 was complied with; but many Marriages at Northampton, about the same period, were solemnized before the Mayor and the Minister of the parish.

(3) Every unmarried lady, prior to the time of George I, was called Mistrasse, hence " Mistress Ann Page."

married 8 Sept. The said William is a husbandman, and liable to pay 3<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup> as the King's duty."

#### Uxbridge.

" 1599, April, Henry Batty, of Thame, and Sara Turno', of this towne the 30 day. Memorandu that the same daye Henry Reddinge, one of the executors of Raffe Turnor late of Pynner, dyd pay to the said Henry Batty and Sara his wief, in the house of Robte Winstone her father in lawe, at the Cocke in Woxbridge, Twentye pounds in money, One Fyne towell, two paier of Fyne Sheets and a pyllouse beeve, as of the Gyfte of the said Raffe Turner her uncle by his last will in writinge, in the p<sup>n</sup>ce of George Battye, Robte Wynston, John Edlyn, Willm. Gatton and Sundrye others."

#### All Saints, Derby.

" Sept. 21, 1653, Richard Bennett and Sara Sales were married together by me Joseph Swetman, according to the ancient Law of the Land."

#### Feltham.

" The names of these followinge are registred by ther parentes and freindes, as neere as can be called to minde, and soe recorded in the yeare of Grace 1649, by reason that the olde register was burnt att the fire in this towne."

" Roger Foote and Maria Ride weare married the seconde day of Februarie, an dom : 1637, at *Sainte Gregorie's Church, by Paules.*"

" Edward Mortemore and Elizabeth Hawkins were married the 26<sup>th</sup> day of Januarye att Ashforde."

" Francis Roys and Sarah Hericle weare married the seconde day of March 1646, the Ladye Day followinge was 1647."

#### Staplehurst, Kent.

" The v<sup>th</sup> day of Maye Ther was maryed Willm. Sybbs and Mgaret Blacke vgy<sup>n</sup>."

" 1668, Ther was maryed John Chaplyn (base) and Johan Curden, basherer."

" 1568, there was married John Pyckenden (the base sonne of Agnes Basoke) and Elsabeth Kytchynam yonge folke."

" 1579, 19 July. There was married John Haffyn den and Creature(?) Cheseman yong folke."

" Vicessimo { Mag<sup>r</sup> Richard Beseley sacre Theologie Pffessor ac  
quarto die { serenissimi et illustrissimi felicis memorie principis  
martii. { henrici octavi nup regis strenvissimi et metuendiss<sup>i</sup>  
Sacellan<sup>r</sup> necno Rector huius Ecclesie et ecclastes  
Janam Lenarde orphanam virgine pavpenlam, pydicam, et honesta  
matrimonio rite solemnizato sibi accepit in coniugem."

#### Debtling, Kent.

" 1647 Robert Turner, Clericus Colebs et fana Smith virgo conjuncti fuere, Bannis p more ter publicatis Julii 9<sup>mo</sup> ano supra-dict."

#### Barming, Kent.

" Edward Green of Ditton, *solus*, and Anne Avery, *sola*, were married April 21, 1681."

#### Portsmouth.

The Register of this Parish has an entry of the Marriage of King Charles the Second, and Catherine Infanta of Portugal: it is finely illuminated, and reads thus:—

" Our Most Gracious Sovereigne Lord Charles the Second, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c., and the most illustrious Princesse *Dona Catarina*, Infanta of Portugall (Daughter of the deceased) *Don Juan* the Fourth, and sister to the present *Don Alphonso*, Kings of Portugall, were married at Portsmouth uppon Thursday the two and twentieth day of May, in the year our Lord God, 1662, being in the fourteenth year of his *Maties* reigne, by the Right Reverend Father in God Gilbert Lord Bishop of London, Dean of his *Maties*

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(1) Vide a note in page 85.

Chappel Royall, in the presence of several of the Nobility of his *Maties* dominions and of Portugall.

Anno Dni. 1662.

Etton, 1587.

" 1613, Henry Smithe and Rose Faule were marryed Apr. 27, 1613. George Denham and Winifred Wright were married the same day, Apr. 27. Two Marriages in one day, never so before in Etton."

Sunbury, Middlesex.

" Samuel Turner and Margaret Sease, widow, was married sitting in a cheare, in her house, Feb: 7, 1663."

St. Mary Minster, Kent. In this Register the surname of the woman is frequently omitted, and the entries are made thus :

" Anno, 1558, Mali 10. Nupt erant Johannes Andrewe et Agnes Uxor eius."

Birchington, Kent.

" 1610, November 12 Thomas Kemp sibi duxit Vxorem Auiciam Cage duodecimo die Novembris 1610."

Aylesford, Kent.

The Register of this Parish commences in 1653 : there is nothing particular in it, except the great number of Marriages of persons living in the surrounding villages, and especially at Rochester and Chatham. This may be accounted for, by the circumstance of the village of Aylesford being very beautifully situated on the Medway, and commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country. To this must be added the circumstance, that formerly the communication between Maidstone and Rochester was by passage boats, which made Aylesford one of their places of landing and taking in passengers. This mode of conveyance has been long discontinued.

Maidstone, Kent. In this Register are memoranda of two exceptions to Marriages, they are thus entered.

“ Publications and Marriages.

“ Abraham Hawkes, of East Farleigh, Servant to Thomas Scultup of the same Free mason, and Mary Emoett of Boughton Monchalsey, was published in the markett place, in Maidstone upon May the 4<sup>th</sup>, the 11<sup>th</sup>, and the 13<sup>th</sup>, 1654. See an exception, page y<sup>e</sup> 8<sup>th</sup>.”

Page 8. “ Lambard Godfrey Esq<sup>r</sup> doth make exception to the proceedinge of the marriage of Abraham Hawkes and Mary Emyot, for that the said Mary Emyot doth seem to be not of competent understanding to dispose of herself in marriage.”

“ The exception made by La<sup>rd</sup>bert Godfrey Esq<sup>r</sup> against the proceeding to marriage of Abraham Hawkes and Mary Emeot above said being heard before Lambert Godfrey aforesaid, Georg Duke Richard Beale Esq<sup>r</sup> and Justices of the Peace of this County, is satisfied and discharged and the marriage of the said Abraham Hawkes and Mary Emeot afores<sup>d</sup> was solemnized before the Justices aforesaid, the sixt day of July 1654.

Lambarde Godfrey,

Geo. Duke

Richa: Beale.”

“ Jane Sutton of Maidstone did the 5<sup>th</sup> day of December 1655, except against the pceeding to marriage of Henry Robins and Katherine Solmon for that as she saith the said Henry Robins did solemnly promise her the said Jane Sutton to make her his wife and upon the 12<sup>th</sup> day of January 1655 he the said Henry Robins had carnal copulation w<sup>th</sup> her the said Jane Sutton whereby as she saith she the said Jane is w<sup>th</sup> child.”

In the first leaf of the Chartulary of St. John of Jerusalem, from 1492 to 1600, is the following entry of Marriage.

“ Memor<sup>d</sup>. The iij<sup>th</sup> day of Novembre the xvij yere of Kynge Henry the Eight, w<sup>in</sup> the howse of Sancte Joh<sup>n</sup>s Clerkenwell in the Buttery of the same my Lorde Thomas Docwra Prioris ther beyng the same tyme present John Docwra son and heire of Thomas Docwra of Kyrkebykendall, in the countie of Westmland, gentilman



beyng of the age of xvij yeres and more and Margaret Turpyn second daughter and heire of Edward Turpyn, now departed of the Countie of Leyceytone gentilwoman beyng of the full age of xiii yeres and more, of ther mere fre will and mynde w'oute fere, drede or compulsion of any man the said Joh<sup>n</sup> toke vnto his wiffe the forse i Margaret, and the seid Margaret toke unto hire husbond the forseid Jo<sup>h</sup>n and thereunto either to other plighte and gave ther feythe and trewthe desiryng and requyrynge witnesse for the same . . . anie . . . Elisabeth Chomley Rowland Brugh Thomas Chicheley Jo<sup>h</sup>n Docwra Thomas Larke and Willyam Bardesey with Dyrs<sup>e</sup>, other at that tyme beyng present.(1)

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(1) The Ritual requires the names of the witnesses present to be inserted in the Register.

## CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE MISCELLANEOUS CONTENTS OF PARISH  
REGISTERS.

ADMITTING the conjecture which has been already adduced, that the first account taken of Births, Marriages and Burials, were memoranda made in the private Journals or Diaries of the Parochial Clergy, it will be readily seen, that entries of other matter in Parish Registers, such as the occurrences of the Parish or immediate neighbourhood, the appointment of churchwardens and overseers, notices as to tithes, moduses, &c., are by no means surprising. Indeed it were to be wished, that these latter particulars had been more frequent; the description of particular lands, liable to tithes or modusus, or tithe free, and so forth, might have tended to prevent the many suits which have subsequently existed between the clergy and their parishioners, which, from the nature of the evidence necessary to be adduced, are generally very expensive, and besides which, those suits are by no means calculated to excite or preserve the reciprocal feelings of respect on the one hand, and attention to the welfare both spiritual and temporal on the other, which should exist between a pastor and his flock.

In some old Register Books, the several entries of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials have been huddled together promiscuously, just as they happened. In some parishes there has been but one book; but it has been begun in different parts for the respective entries, and when the part allotted to one particular class was filled,

the book was turned up and begun at the end, and from thence carried to some other part; and the result was, that it very soon became a mass of confusion, and could not be searched with certainty, without incredible trouble. A very sad practice also existed, and may even continue, in some parishes, to the present day, that of having but one large book for each class of entries, which of course lasted a great many years, and the constant *thumbing* and use of it, made it by the time it was filled, not only greased and dirty, but in some places illegible, by the constant friction of the hand or fingers passing over it.

At present, the printed forms for the several entries of Baptisms, &c., pursuant to the last act, seem to preclude the mention of any other particulars. It might, perhaps, be useful to have a column or a small blank, in each of the printed pages, for "Remarks." In the Parish of Barming, the Register is replete with biographical remarks, which though not evidence, will materially assist posterity in their researches.

The following entries will serve to shew the various particulars which have from time to time been recorded in the Parish Registers; and may also, in many instances, shew the singular customs of the periods to which they refer.

#### In the Register of Fordham in Cambridgeshire.

"1604, upon Wednesday y<sup>e</sup> 27 of Febr y<sup>e</sup> year above written y<sup>e</sup> High and Mighty Prince James by y<sup>e</sup> Grace of God King of Great Britain France and Ireland Defender of y<sup>e</sup> Faith &c. did hunt y<sup>e</sup> hare with his own hounds in our Feilds of Fordham and did kill six near a place called Blackland and afterwards did take his repast in y<sup>e</sup> same Feilds at a Bush near unto King's Path."

#### Frocester, Gloucestershire.

"Hoc anno 1674 die Laurentii Martyris, serenissima Regina mea Elizabetha hoc meum oppidatum accessit et invisit in eoq; in

ædibus Georgii Huntleii Armigeri Comiter, benigneq et suma cum humanitate tractantis pernoctavit indeq: Barkleyum Castellum concessit.

Tho. Tullio Vicario de Frocester."

Wolverton.

"Licence given to Sir Tho: Temple Kn<sup>t</sup> and Bart, for eating flesh on days prohibited, on paying 13<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup>." (1)

Bow Brickhill.

"Franc Bradford agrees to keep the church in repair of glass for 3<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup> annually."

In the Register of the Parish of Strathern the names of several Quakers are registered, and some bigot has underwritten.

"Qui supra scripserint anathemate magis quam fide digni."

The Reply of some later Incumbent is—

"Qui supra scripserit reprehensione magis quam laude dignus."

Cherington.

"Anno 1631 Martii 26<sup>o</sup> whereas upon the second day of March 1630, 1 there was under the hand of the parson and churchwardens, a licence to eat flesh in lent to William Bayley, who was then notoriously known to be sick and whereas his sickness lasted, above a fortnight. Now that his licence is here entered in the Register Book the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March 1631."

Ita est Dan: Parker, Rector."

(1) The keeping of Lent was enforced by proclamation, and an office for granting licences to eat flesh in any part of England, was established in St. Paul's Church-Yard, and advertised in the public papers, anno 1663; but much relaxation obtained at this period, by giving money to the poor instead.

## St. Mary's, Newington, Surrey.

In the Register is a similar licence to eat flesh but, "provided alwaies that during the time of her sickness she eats no beife veale, porke, mutton, or bacon."

## Eynesbury, in Hunts.

"Whereas by a Statute made in the 5<sup>th</sup> yere of the Quenes Majestye's Raygne that now is, called the Statute of Navygacyon, y<sup>e</sup> is granted that persons notoriously sycke maye be lycensed by the parson of the paryshe where the partyes dwell to enjoy the benefyt of eatinge of fleshe on the daies prohybyted by the saide statute, for the recoverynge of theyre healthe (yf y<sup>e</sup> pleasith God). Let y<sup>e</sup> be knowne to the Seere hereof That Jhon Barton, of the Paryshe of Eynesburye in the Countye of Huntingdon being verye sycke, ys lycensyd to eate fleshe for the Tyme of his Sycknes; soo that he enjoyeinge the Benefytt of the Lycence his Sycknes contynewing 8 dayes, do cause the same to be registored into the Register Booke in the same Paryshe accordyng to the tenor of the Statute in that behalfe, and this Lycence no longer to endure than his sicknes doth laste.

By me, Wyllyam Samuell, Parson of Eynesburye."

## St. Mary's, Leicester.

"1618 Licence to Lady Barbara Hastings, to eat Flesh in Lent on account of her great age."

## Barrington Parva, Gloucestershire.

"The Proclamation of King James 2<sup>d</sup> ordering thanksgiving for his Victory over the Rebels, which were headed by James Scott, formerly Duke of Monmouth, and Ford, once Lord Grey, together with the Service appointed for that day, were used and performed in the Church of this Parish on the 26<sup>th</sup> of July, 1695.

Thomas Lambe, Vicar."

"Mem: that on Oct: 6, 1695, I paid my Butcher 5<sup>s</sup> 5<sup>d</sup>, my Baker 1<sup>l</sup> 10<sup>s</sup>, my Brewer 1<sup>l</sup> 10<sup>s</sup>, all in gold, taking in change 9<sup>d</sup>.

O Rare Parson Tom."



The Register of Badminton Magna, in the same county, contains a very full account of laying the corner stone of the new church, and its final erection and consecration, in 1785, which account is signed by the Nobility and Gentry, who assisted, or were present, on that occasion.

In the Register of Frampton upon Severn, is a long detail of damage done by a storm on the 18th of February 1662, which, in the space of four hours, destroyed 12 barns, 1 dwelling house, and rooted up 357 trees, chiefly in orchards. The account is subscribed, "John Barnsdale, Vicar."

Boughton Register contains the particulars of the recovery, in 1606, of the Town Land, which had been in a wrongful possession sixty years; and Gayton Register, the particulars of the setting out of the "Towne Grounde," in 1600; and Coldingham Register, of the building of a seat in the church, "for the youth of the parish, very decent and fit."

In that of Rodmarton is the following entry:—

"In the Windowe of the South Isle adjoining to the Chancell, was a little picture in the Glasse, of one praying in the habit of a Minister *cum baculo pastorali* and under-written, 'Richardus Exall' which was broken by Children, perhaps he was at the charge of that window."

The Registry of Buckland in Gloucestershire, contains an account of the plague which raged there in 1606, by which the Rector, John Maltbee, lost six children in one month.

Upon the appointment of Lay Registrars in 1653, they sometimes began their entries in fresh books, while others had their appointment registered in the Register Book, then in use, and continued to make the entries therein: this will appear to be the case at Hokington, where the Parish

Clerk was appointed Registrar. The Memoranda there are as follows :—

“ 1643, Thes year the clarkship came to me,  
Thomas Waiman.”

“ 1653 3 Nov: Thomas Wayman chosen by the parishioners of Okington to be parish Register, is approved of and sworne for the due execucon of his office, before me  
Talbot Pepys”

The observation upon this appointment is,

“ He was however a most wretched officer and Scribe the entries being jumbled together in a most extraordinary manner and abominably written during his Registrarship.”

Manceter, Warwickshire.

The return of the Register Book, by the Lay Register appointed under Cromwell's Act in 1653, is thus mentioned in the Register.

“ This Book was returned by William Wilson late Register of Anseley to me Francis Bacon Vicar of Anseley, April 24, 1661.”

“ Hartlepool, Durham.

“ 1697 Mem: that the collectors for the Royal aid Seas in the year 97 cheated most abominably the Town of Hartinpoole, gathering the value of y' where it was not due.”

Whitworth, Durham.

“ 1635, The church-yard walled, being before a hedge.”

“ 1636 The Church repaired in Seats flagging leading and other particulars.”

“ 1667 The Church was Leaded by the parish and the Chancel by the Dean and Chapter.”

## Holy Trinity Parish, in Dorchester.

" 1651 Aug 22 At night there was great thunder and lightning such as had not been known by any living in this age and there fell with it a great storm of hail, some of the stones of which were seven inches about with abundance of rain, and it continued all night and great part of next morning till 8 or 9 of the clock—That same day were M<sup>r</sup> Love and M<sup>r</sup> Gibbons beheaded."

The Register of Radipole, in the same county, contains an account of the perambulations made by the Parish officers periodically for the purpose of ascertaining the boundaries of the Parish; and that of Dalton le Dale, a form of public penance for offenders guilty of fornication.

The first Register Book of Cogenhoe in Northamptonshire contains a list of all the families in the parish in 1640, with their christian and surnames.

## Feltham, Middlesex.

On the inside of the cover of the oldest book is the following :—

Job Cylantine  
Vicar of Feltham  
1620

Three Horses	-	-	-	-	-	13	0	0
5 Coves	-	-	-	-	-	15	0	0
2 Soves in pige	-	-	-	-	-	2	10	0
3 Cartes	-	-	-	-	-	12	0	0
3 harowes	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	6
2 plowes	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	0
1 Rovell	-	-	-	-	-	0	5	0
1 Screen	-	-	-	-	-	0	10	0
A Fan	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	6
A Beshell	-	-	-	-	-	0	5	0
A Wier Sive	-	-	-	-	-	0	4	0
A Rider and 2 sives more	-	-	-	-	-	0	2	0
3 pronges	.	.	.	.	.	0	2	0

A Casten Shovell	- - - -	0	1	0
Hornes for 4 hors	- - - -	2	0	0
for 25 bushell of wheat to sow	-	6	5	0
Gras Seed for 5 Akers good	-	1	2	6
half A years Rent At Lady Day		17	10	0
<hr/>				
83:00:06				

## Great Stretton, Leicestershire.

" April 27 1708 Paid for a Carriage for the Queen from Har-  
borough to Deventree £2—charge going to hire it 1'—£2 1 0."

## Scraptoft, Leicestershire.

" To redeem Thomas son of Mr. Owsley Rector of Glooston,  
taken by the Algerines £1 11 3 (28 July 1679)."

## Quorndon, Leicestershire.

" An Excommunication against Anne Turlington the Wife of  
Thomas Turlington in not sending an Inventory by an order of the  
Ecclesiastical Court in Leicester was published this 4<sup>th</sup> day of Feb.  
1749—50 by me

Moor Scribo."

" Memorandum April 25 1730 George Collingwood gave to  
John Chapman the foremost pew belonging to him the said George  
Collingwood in the Church of Quorndon for his own proper use<sup>(1)</sup>."

Thomas Allen Clerk  
Edward Farnham."

## Syston, Leicestershire.

" 1605 Paid for the entertaining of a Counsellor in the Cause  
against Sir George Bellgrave 10s."

" 1605 Kings Arms in the Church defaced."

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(1) An old entry in a Vestry Book, stating that a pew had been repaired by  
the then owner of a message, has been admitted evidence of the right of a person  
claiming under him. Price v. Littlewood, 3 Campb. 288.

## Loughborough, Leicestershire.

" 1551 June—" The Swat, called New acquaintance, alias Stoupe, Knave, and know thy Master" began the 24th of this Month."

1673 Brief for rebuilding the Theatre Royal in London." (1)

## Appleby Magna, Leicestershire.

In the Register of this Parish is a Copy of the " Pro-  
testation made by the House of Parliament, to be taken of  
every one from the age of 16 upwards, A.D. 1641, Feb. 27."  
It is signed by 144 persons who had taken the oath. (2)

## Burbach, Leicestershire.

" William Townsend, Baker, planted a young elm-tree near  
the Stocks in December 1706."

This tree is mentioned by Mr. Nicholls in his History  
of Leicestershire, to be still growing there.

## Bitteswell, Leicestershire.

In the Register of this Parish is an Entry shewing the  
feelings of the Parson or Clerk towards some unfortunate  
female; whether it has any connexion with the preceding  
one or not, does not however appear, they stand thus.—

" 1638 Mary Sutton Daughter of Robert Sutton and Isabel  
his Wife was baptized Nov. 4."

" Mary Snelson is starke nought, stinking naught. Blot not  
this out."

(1) The lapse of a century alters public opinion, as well as most other things: a *modera* congregation would be astounded to hear the clergyman read, at the close of the morning prayers, a brief for the rebuilding the Opera-House, or Drury Lane Theatre.

(2) This is not very uncommon, the Register of Eastwell in Kent contains the protestation dated February 23rd 1642, signed by 29 persons; the vow and covenant of 1643, signed by 32 persons; and the solemn league and covenant, dated February 25, 1643, signed by 19 persons. Vide p. 115.



Mr. Castel a former Vicar of this Parish, and who took great pains with the Register, has entered in it among other things a Table of "Customes" which perhaps has already, or may hereafter prove of great service, as well to his successors as their parishioners.

"A Transcription of Customes for all tythings due to the Vicar of Bitteswell, rates and others, as have been recorded by M<sup>r</sup>. Edw. Duckminton who was Vicar of the said parish about the yeare 1630 By me Geo: Castell, present Vicar 1665.

Imprim. Pro domo 2½<sup>d</sup>—that is for the house 1<sup>d</sup> for the hearth 1<sup>d</sup>, and for the garden ½ to be paid at Easter. For man and wife, offerings 2<sup>d</sup>, for Servants and children 1½<sup>d</sup> at Easter." &c. &c. &c.

The practice of touching for the King's Evil is known to most people, but few perhaps are aware to what an extent this superstitious idea once prevailed. In the course of 20 years, between 1660 and 1682, no less than 92,107 persons were touched for this Disease; and in the Reign of Charles II. a proclamation issued (9th January, 1683,) appointing the times at which the touch would be administered, "and all such as shall hereafter come or repair to the Court for this purpose shall bring with them Certificates under the hands and seals of the Parson, Vicar, or Minister, and of both or one of the Churchwardens, testifying according to the truth, that they have not at any time before been touched by His Majesty, to the intent to be healed of their disease. And all Ministers and Churchwardens are hereby required to be very careful to examine into the truth before they give such Certificates, and also to keep a *Register* of all Certificates they shall from time to time give."

The Registers, therefore, of Parishes in the neighbourhood of the Court will frequently be found to contain entries of these Certificates, although the Kings and Queens of this Kingdom were accustomed to touch for this Disease while in their Progresses, and so dispense to persons

residing at a distance from London, the healing which was supposed to be possessed by "The Royal Touch."

The Register of Camberwell contains the names of three persons, touched in 1684 for the King's Evil. In that of Merstham (Surrey) is the following:—

"Certificats to his Ma<sup>y</sup> about touching for y<sup>e</sup> evill, signed by y<sup>e</sup> Rect' and Churchwardens of Merstham."

"To Prudence y<sup>e</sup> Daughter of Will: Lovell Octob: 6<sup>e</sup>—73—

"To George Palmer y<sup>e</sup> sonne of Willia' Mar 5<sup>e</sup>—1674.

"the father and Son having touch'd before."

Hambleden, Bucks.

"1685 May 17 Mary Wallington had a certificate to goe before the King for a disease called the King's Evil."

Alrewas, Staffordshire.

"1767 Edward Hall who was touched and cured by his Majesty King Charles the Second for the King's Evil, was buried Jan<sup>y</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> Aged 110 years."

In the Bermondsey Register, which begins in 1548.

"1604

The forme of a solemne Vowe made betwixt a Man and his Wife, the Man havinge been longe absent, through which occasion the Woman beinge married to another Man tooke her againe as followeth.

#### The Man's Speech

*Elizabeth*, my beloved Wife, I am right sorie that I have so longe absented my seaffe from thee, whereby thou shouldest be occasioned to take another man to thy husband—Therefore I do nowe vowe and promise, in the sight of God and this Companie, to take thee againe as mine owne, and will not onelie forgive thee, but also dwell with thee, and do all other duties unto thee as I promised at our Mariage.

## The Woman's Speech

*Raphe*, my beloved husband, I am right sorie that I have in thy absence, taken another man to be my husband; but here, before God, and this Companie I do renounce and forsake him, and do promise to kepe my sealfe onelie unto thee, duringe life, and to perform all duties which I first promised unto thee in our Mariage.

## The Prayer

Almightie God, we beseech thee to pardon our offences and give us grace ever hereafter to live together in thy feare, and to performe the holie duties of mariage one to another accordinge as we are taught in thy holie word, for thy deare Son's sake, Jesus, Amen.

The first day of August 1604 *Raphe Goodchilde* of the Parish of Barkinge in Thames Street and *Elizabeth* his Wife weare agreed to live together, and thereupon gave their hands one to another, making either of them a solema vowe so to doe in the presence of

William Stere, parson  
Edward Coker, and  
Richard Eire, Clark."

*Alrewas*, Staffordshire. The Register of this Parish is, for several years, a most complete Journal of Weather, storms, floods, and other parochial occurrences. The following is copied from it.

"1617 *Jacobus rex noster rediebat apud Whorescrosse* *xxi*<sup>mo</sup> die mensis Augustii, et illic remansit die Sabbati, Dominica, et Luna abiit."

*Woodmansterne, Surrey.*

"They whom it may concern are desired to take notice that the Chimny in the Hall-Chamber of the Parsonage house hath a *Summer* not far under one Corner of it, soe that it may safely be used for any ordinary occasions for a small fire in a Chamber, but it is not fit for soe great fires as the Parlour Chimney—1676."

## Empingham, Rutland.

" 1663 Memorandum sit et notandu posteris quod tredecim mares (nulla interveniente puella) hoc anno in oppido hoc Empinghamie, nati fuerunt; quorum undecim baptizati sunt; reliqui duo, ut pote' filii anabaptistatum, baptizandi supersunt—Carolus Twicken ibid: Vicarius."

## All-hallows, London Wall.

" The last Marriage is Feb' 2 1580-1 the next April 30. 1581 Here endeth the yeare of our Lorde 1580, and hereafter foloweth the yeare of our Lord 1581, and is, as is in the next leaf is to be seen—So that there is no more marriages than ye here see; and therefore doth make they are so to end, and the other so to begynn; not that begynnyng and endyng of the yere is so, but that the one is the last that was in that yere, and the other the first that was to begynne the other yere, which is as feloweth 1581 Exce.(1)"

## Narburgh, Norfolk.

" 1709 Maria filia Francisci Legate et Elizabethæ uxoris ejus baptizata fuit 30 die Aprilis."

" Mary Daughter of Francis Legate and Elizabeth his Wife buried 4 May 1709."

" Huic Mariæ à pectore ad femurusque, secunda fuit adunata Filia mortua quidem, sed ejusmodi inter hanc et vivam Communicatio ut hæc Spirante, in illius Corpore visibilis dabatur motio; Biceps fuit hic fœtus, cujus Capita, quatuor sustentabant Humeri totidem annexis non tantum Brachijs, sed et manibus, à Pudendis etiam (quæ fuerent Duplicia) in quatuor femora, totidemque dividebatur Crura, necnon et Pedes omnino perfectos."

## Brewton, Somerset.

" 1621 King Charles heard a Sermon preached by the Bishop of Bath and Wells in Brewton Church, text, Psalm 68<sup>th</sup> v: 1<sup>st</sup>."

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(1) This was no doubt intended for an explanatory note, but it is not to be understood by a cursory perusal.

" 1644 King Charles with Prince Charles was at Brewton."

St. Pancras, Soper Lane, London.

" 1593 This year the plague was very quick in London, Ostie par la pyte l'ire de Dieu enflamme à l'enconter la Ville."

St. Andrews, Holborn.

" 1563 July 23 Here begun the great plague,"

" 1563-4 Feb: Here, by God's mercy the plague did cease ; whereof died in this parish, this year, to the number of four hundred four scour and ten."

Chapel Royal Register.

" His royall Highness's two daughters Lady Mary and Lady Anne were confirm'd by the Deane of the Chappell on Sunday Jan 23. 1675 after Evening Prayer."

" Monsieur Martin Breton a priest and preacher at St. Pauls Church at Paris made his recantac'on in the Chappell after Evening Prayer imediately before the Grace of o' L<sup>d</sup> Jesus X<sup>t</sup> &c. on Nov<sup>r</sup> 19. 1676 He declared his unfeigned sorrow y<sup>t</sup> he had bin so long detained in the Ch<sup>of</sup> Rome and promis'd as long as his life should last he would bee a true Son of the Church of England. In testimony whereof he gave it under his hand openly, to the Ld Bp of London then Dean of the Chappell."

" On Maundy Thursday April 16 1686 our gracious King James y<sup>e</sup> 2<sup>d</sup> wash'd wip'd and kiss'd the feet of 52 poor men w<sup>th</sup> wonderfull humility. And all the Service of the Church of England usuall on that occasion was performed, his Maty being poent all the time."

" July the 24<sup>th</sup> 1689 This morning about four a clock her royall Highness the Princess Anne of Denmark was safely delivered of a Son. The Queen was present the whole time of her Labour w<sup>ch</sup> lasted about 3 hours and y<sup>e</sup> King w<sup>th</sup> most of the persons of quality about the Court, came into her Royall Highnesses Bed Chamber, before she was delivered."



**Christ Church, Newgate Street, London.**

" 1764 According to an order of the Court of Kings Bench made on Wednesday May 6 1761 the Bodies of Robert Munden and Anne Horsley were buried in the passage on the North Side of Christ Church, to ascertain the right of burying in that Ground to the Parishioners, by Rowland Sandiford Vicar."

" 1790 July 30 Discovered a vault belonging to the parish of Christ Church under the old vestry door with a flight of 17 steps and breadth 8 feet length 13 depth 7 leading from the upper step of the North aisle."

**Framlingham Earl, Norfolk.**

" 1588 The 19 of Nov: was a day of Thanksgiving to God for the great and wonderful Overthrow of the Spanish Navy which came to fight the Pope's Battle against this Island for their gospel, at which overthrow, the very enemies were so astonished that some of them said Christ was become a Lutheran, and all that saw it did say that it was the Lord's Work so this day was appointed by our Church to be spent throughout the realme, in preachinge, praying, singing of psalms, and giving thanks for a thankful memorial of of the Lord's merciful mercies yerelie."

**St. Saviour's, Southwark.**

" 4 May 1595 a search was made for the burial of Francis Blunt Gentleman, by one whose name was Thomas Earnley, who, when the thing was found seemed discontent that it was not noted who the man was, being buried in the Evening obscurely, and therefore desired that it might be added that he was Uncle to Charles Lord Mountjoy then living that so it might after appear of what place and state the man was, but whether his Information were true or no, this Book can be no warrant. True it is that one of that name was buried."

**Framlingham, Suffolk.**

" The 21<sup>st</sup> of Januarre Ano 1614 ther was sutch a Water at the Mill Bredge as the like was neuer seene in any man's tyme then

lyueynge, and the next days begane the great Snowe, wch laye full seauen weekes."

#### Hillingdon, Middlesex.

"1662 This year on Easter Day was Low Sunday 300 persons received the communion, alarmed to their duty by an order from Henry, Lord Bishop of London."

Twickenham, Middlesex. At the beginning of the earliest Register are the following Entries, shewing a mode of settling differences without recourse to law or equity.

"The fourth day of Aprell in 1568 in the presence of the hole paryshe of Twycknam was agreement made betwyxt M<sup>r</sup> Packer and hys Wyffe, and Hewe Rytte and Siclye Daye, of a Slander brought up by the sayde Rytte and Siclye Daye upon the aforesayde M<sup>r</sup> Packer."

"The 10 daye of Aprell 1568 was agreement made between Thomas Whytt and James Herne, and have consented that whosoever geveth occasion of the breaking of Christen love and charyty betwyxt them, to forfet to the poor of the paryshe 3<sup>s</sup> & 4<sup>d</sup> being dewlye proved."

St. Michael, Derby. On the cover of this Register is the following :—

"May 17<sup>th</sup> 1722 Hannah the Daughter of Henry Burton Junior was born neither by Land nor Sea."

St. Alkmund's, Derby. The Register of this parish is exceeding neat, and the writing in places beautiful. It has the following Entries :—

"Incipit pestis pestifera."

"Obiit mortem Margeria Cotes Feb 2, prima ex peste."

"1593 Octob 4 Hic destinit pestis pestifera, Sit Deo gratia."

"1606 Sepultus puer inventus parvæ bestriæ in agris."

"1634 Mense Augusti Campanarium Sanct' Alkmundi denuo

reconditum est, et Campana quarta refusa. Henrico Coke Ministro, Thoma Burne et Samuel Storer Economicis, Roberto Caddow et Josepho Reeve Operariis, et finitum est opus integrum decimo quarto die ejusdem mensis Augusti 1624, quo die Rex Jacobus una cum Carolo Principe, Villam Derbyam in progressu intraverunt et duas noctes in eadem villa . . . tantes."

### All-Saints, Derby.

" October 1593 About this tyme the plauge of pestilence, by the great mercy and goodness of Almighty God stayed, past all expectation of man for it ceased upon asodayne, at whyche tyme it was dispersed in every corner of this whole p'she, there was not two houses together free from it, and yet the Lord bade the Angel stay as in Davide's tyme, hye name be blessed for y<sup>e</sup>."

Edward Bennett, Minister."

### Uxbridge, Middlesex.

" 1728 N B July 7 Unity Winch did penance at morning service for May 26, on the 26 of May is an Entry of the Baptism of the illegitimate child of Unity Winch."

### All-Saints, Derby.

" 1642 The 22<sup>nd</sup> of this August 1642 erectum fuit Nottinghamiæ Vexillum regale Matt xii, 25."

" October Rot at Kinton 23 day."

" Nov Rot at Branford 12 day."

Rot at Swarston Bridge 5 day."

" 1643 Jan : Ashbie 17 day."

### Tottenham.

" M<sup>r</sup> Elizabeth Husbands was buried April 1754 in my middle Chancell of whose executor M<sup>r</sup> Poston I demanded and received £4., 10., 0 viz £4 for the breaking up the ground in my said middle Chancel and 10<sup>s</sup> for performing the service on the occasion, and this from a full conviction that the Register of this parish gave me an undoubted right to demand and receive said fees."

## Llanasaph, Flintshire.

" Charles the first (being King of Great Britain and France and Ireland) was beheaded at London near Whitehall the 30<sup>th</sup> day of Januarie about two of the clocke in the Evening 1648."

## Market Rasin, Lincolnshire.

" Memorand<sup>m</sup> That Jn<sup>o</sup> Watson on Feb<sup>y</sup> 14 attempted without my consent to sett up a Belfrey on y<sup>e</sup> little piece of ground adjoyning to M<sup>r</sup> Bennit's House; whereuppon I discharged him, in vindication of y<sup>e</sup> right of y<sup>e</sup> Church, as my predecessor M<sup>r</sup> W<sup>m</sup> Bennit has done severell times formerly.

Ita Testor

W<sup>m</sup> Carrington."

1693

" Mem: I let Jn<sup>o</sup> White, Mercer in the Town, to build the Pew in the Chancell, joyning to my reading Desk, by my leave and consent, in the yeare 1693; and I give him leave to set in it as long as I please.

Fra Smith."

1708

" Mem: That by tradition, Tith Ale hath been paid in y<sup>e</sup> Town about 500 yeares. It was first laid upon the Town by y<sup>e</sup> Prior of Sixhill, for y<sup>e</sup> Prandium of his Supper."

(not signed.)

## Youlgrave, Derbyshire.

" A Memoriall of the great snow."

" This year 1614-5 Jan. 16 began the greatest snow which ever fell uppon the earth, within man's memorye. It cover'd the earth fyve quarters deep uppon the playne. And for heapes or drifts of snow, they were very deep, so that passengers, both horse and foot, passed over yates hedges and walles. It fell at ten severall tymes, and the last was the greatest, to the greate admiration and feare of all the land, for it came from the foure p<sup>ts</sup> of the world, so that all c'ntries were full, yea, the south p<sup>te</sup> as well as these mountaynes. It continued by daily encreasing untill the 12<sup>th</sup> day

of March, (without the sight of any earth, eyther uppon hilles or valleyes) uppon w<sup>ch</sup> daye, being the Lordes day, it began to decrease; and so by little and little consumed and wasted away, till the eight and twentyth day of May, for then all the heapes or drifts of snow were consumed, except one uppon Kinder-Scout, w<sup>ch</sup> lay till Witson week.

“Hydrances and losses in this peake c’ntry by the snowe abovesayd. 1 It hindered the seed tyme. 2 It consumed much fodder. 3 And many wanted fewell, otherwise few were smothered in the fall or drowned in the passage; in regard the floods of water were not great though many,

“The name of our Lord be prayed.”

“There fell also ten lesse snowes in Aprill, some a foote deep, some lesse, but none continued long. Uppon Mayday, in the morning, instead of fetching in flowers, the youthes brought in flakes of snow, w<sup>ch</sup> lay above a foot deep uppon the moores and mountaynes.”

“1615 a dry summer.”

“There was no rayne fell uppon the earth from the 26<sup>th</sup> day of March till the 2<sup>d</sup> day of May, and then there was but one shower, after which there fell none tyll the 18<sup>th</sup> day of June, and then there fell an other; after y<sup>t</sup> there fell none at all till the 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, after which tyme there was sufficient rayne uppon the earth; so that the greatest p<sup>t</sup> of this land, especially the south p<sup>t</sup> were burnt upp both corne and hay. An ordinary sum<sup>er</sup> load of hay was at 2l, and little or none to be gott for money.

“This p<sup>t</sup> of the peake was very sore burnt upp, onely Lankshyre and Cheshyre had rayne ynough all sum<sup>er</sup>; and both corne and hay sufficient.

“There was very little rayne fell the last winter but snowe onely.”

Firmingley, Notts.

“These are to certify, that I, William Romley, of Burton in the County of Lincoln, was parish clerk of Firmingley, when the Rev. Mr. Barnardiston was Rector of the same, and was an eye witness of the following Transaction which happened as I remember in or about the month of July in the year 1707, viz.



" Zachariah Bolton riding with his gun on Mr. Barnardiston's bay horse into 'Auckley Colt Field,' found five stags herded, about 200 yards west from y<sup>e</sup> bottom of the 'Long Hedge.' He fired amongst them, and disabled one in the hinder parts; then quitting his horse, he caught the stag by the hind leg, and called to Jarrah Wood and myself, who were not far off, for help, but the stag struggling and braying, the horse took him by the neck, and beat him with his fore-foot till he lay still, then we took him alive, laid him on the horse and carried him to the parsonage house at Firmingley, into the little court yard before the kitchen door, where he was killed and drest, by the order of John Harvey Esq<sup>r</sup> of Ickwell Bury, who was there present, and had before given us an order to go about the said transaction.

" The truth of this I am ready to attest upon oath, if so required; Witness my hand this 25<sup>th</sup> day of June 1737.

" W<sup>m</sup> Romley." (1)

#### St. Nicholas, Durham.

1592. " Simson, Arington, Fetherstone, Fenwicke, and Lancaster were hanged for being Egyptians."

" April 1683 It is ordered that Simon Lackenby is to keep in lieu of his Entercommon Ground, one sufficient Bull for the use of the City and Borough Kyne, for three years next ensuing; and to give ten shillings towards a silver plate for a Course."

#### Aldingbourn, Sussex.

" The Vicarage of Aldingborne is not to pay any procurations to the Archdeacon; neither was the glebe lands or the tythes belonging to the Vicarage ever taxed, within the memory of Man, to any payments, saving in this year 1635 vj<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup> to the Shipping.

" Teste Daniel Thompson

" Vicar."

" By an order from my Lord's Grace of Canterbury the persons living in Aldingborne were numbered, May 26 1676 and found to

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(1) Peck's Bawtry and Thorn.

be 329 living souls; of these, two were suspected to be Papists and two more received the Communion, as it is enjoined by the Church of England.

“ Thomas Phillips

“ Vicar.”

### Worldham.

1621-2 “ Mem: That at this present viz: June 9<sup>th</sup> there are in Worldham parish ten women living who have had buried 15 husbands, of which women two are married again and 8 remain widows, which 8 have had buried 13 husbands and might perhaps have had buried many more, if they had had them, but all the men in Worldham Parish, at this time living have had buried but 3 wives.”

“ 1622 George Fay born as himself saith 1563. was buried Allhallows day. At this time there are so many women dwelling in Worldham Parish as have buried 15 husbands but all the men now dwelling in Worldham have buried but one wife.”

North Mundham, Sussex. In this Register is a document relative to the extent of the parish, and the ancient method of measuring land.

“ 1633 A land scot” (rate on land) “ made for the west part of the parish of North Mundham, 14 yard-lands and 8 coats” (i. e. 2 yard-lands) “ Fishers 14 yard-lands and 8 coats. Brimfast 6 yard-lands. Sum total 42 yard-lands and 1 coat.”

“ Runcton 20 yard-lands and 1 coat. Sum of all the parish 62 yard-lands and a coat. The land scot is made for the Church.”

### St. Mary's, Lichfield.

“ Aug 16 1572 Hoc die Johannes Bagshawe admissus est in ludim'rum.”

### Isham.

“ 1630 This was a cheap yeare of all grain—ordinary Wheat

at 18<sup>s</sup> the stryke—Rye at 16<sup>s</sup> and after at 12—Barley at nine and ten pence and mault at 15<sup>s</sup> and 16<sup>s</sup> a strike."

" 1621 A very dear yeare of all manner of Corne, and about the end of 1622 Wheat 4<sup>s</sup> and more. Barley 3<sup>s</sup> Mault 4<sup>s</sup> and the prices of all these some market daies more."

" 1630 This yeare was a great plague at Cambridge, so that ther was no Stirbyshe Faire kept, and this was a dear yeare, Wheat at 8<sup>s</sup> a strike Pease 6<sup>s</sup> and Mault at 6<sup>s</sup> 8<sup>d</sup>—Pease at 5<sup>s</sup> never so deare as at this time."

Barton Segrave, 1609.

" Memorandum in perpetuum. King Charles the Second (after twelve years exile) was by a miracle of mercy restored unto his three Kingdoms his undoubted right May 29<sup>th</sup> 1660.

" Soli Deo Gloria

" W. H."

West Farleigh, Kent.

The Register of this Parish contains much curious information, together with an agreement made between the Vicar and the Parishioners, Feb. 15th, 32d of Elizabeth, of the sums payable for Church Fees, Tythes, &c. &c.

Sutton Vallenge,(<sup>1</sup>) Kent.

" Memorandum November 25—17. (1717)

" On which day Eliz Stace did publick penance for y<sup>e</sup> fowl sin of adultery committed with Tho Hutchins jun<sup>r</sup> in Sutton Vallenge Church as did y<sup>e</sup> abovem<sup>d</sup> Anne Hynds for y<sup>e</sup> fowl sin of Fornication committed with Tho: Daws above written

Sa: Prat. Vicar."

Staplehurst, Kent.

" 1549 The ninthe day of June. This day being Whitsonday

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(1) The Register contains the names of all the Vicars, from 1558, with biographical notes.

(wherein the Booke of the Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and other rite and Ceremonie of the Church after the use of the Church of Englande begon to be executed) ther was first baptized Marie the dawghter of Richard Beseley pe<sup>son</sup> of this py<sup>sh</sup>e Church borne the last Thursday hora fere quinta ante meridiem of his lawfull Wif Jane who were maryed the year before and in the first day that the holly comvni<sup>on</sup> in the English tonge (after the order that now is) was here mynystered) ther bothe w<sup>it</sup> others most humblye and devoutlie comvnicating the same. The p<sup>erson</sup>e Christined his owne Childe."

In the Register of this Parish is also noticed at one period the Churchings of Women, thus,

"the xii day of May was churched Wyllyam Bassoke's Wyffe and Wyllyam Foller's Wyffe."

Boxley, Kent. The Register contains a note of the Will of "William Kember sometymes a poor Child of Boxley touching the Guyfte of xxx' by y<sup>e</sup> year to the poor of Boxley."

Wrotham, Kent.

"A Note of what is collected in y<sup>e</sup> Parish of Wrotham from House to House towards y<sup>e</sup> rebuilding of the Cathedrall Church of St. Paul London according to y<sup>e</sup> direction of his Maties Letters Patents in y<sup>e</sup> case issued forth unto us.

In p <sup>er</sup> mis John Rayney Barronett .....	00	2	00
John Williams Vicar .....	00	5	00
Elizabeth Johnson Mayd Servant.....	00	00	6
Elizabeth Brickwall Mayd Servant .....	00	00	6
Robert Dorman.....	00	00	2
John Croffeild .....	00	00	6
Thomas Lorkin .....	00	00	4

Richard Heaver.....	00	00	2
William Knell .....	00	00	3
George Knell Servant .....	00	00	2
Henry Staley .....	00	00	6
Richard Bond .....	00	00	4
Olave Williams Servant Mayd.....	00	00	4
Robert Ware John Ware and Robert Ware his Sonns contemptuously refused ..			
Edward Morgans als Hills .....	00	00	1
Luke Chester.....	00	00	2
John Gregory .....	00	00	2
Widdow Terry at y <sup>e</sup> Pond .....	00	00	1
Richard Wood .....	00	00	4
Thomas Tomlyn contemptuously refused..			
Thomas Caterly contemptuously refused al- ledging y <sup>t</sup> it was a Nursery of Popery			
Regnald Peckham Esq <sup>r</sup> .....	00	2	6
John Marshall .....	00	00	6
Henry Johnson .....	00	00	6
Thomas Charlwood .....	00	00	8
Thomas Bird Servant .....	00	00	2
James Clarke Servant .....	00	00	2
William Terry Jun <sup>r</sup> .....	00	00	6
Thomas Tomlyn Gentleman.....	00	01	0
Henry Miller.....	00	00	2
Thomas Dallender Gentleman .....	00	02	6
Widow Everest .....	00	00	2
John Lance .....	00	00	6
William Ivill.....	00	00	1
Nicholas Miller, Esq <sup>r</sup> .....	00	03	00
Robert Carpenter .....	00	00	4
Thomas Baldwin .....	00	00	6
Reginald Hayward .....	00	00	1
John Gammon .....	00	00	1
John Gallett .....	00	00	6
William Baldwin .....	00	00	6
William Gibbourn .....	00	00	6
William Saunders.....	00	00	6



Widdow Godden (1) ..... 00 00 6

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(1) The Parish of Wrotham is one of the most extensive in the County of Kent, although no more than £1 : 7 : 6 was collected in it for this purpose. It will be seen that five of the Parishioners refused contribution, they had, no doubt, been of Cromwell's party, and were not to be moved by the appeal to their generosity contained in the briefs, notwithstanding "It was ordered" (1677 Dec. 6) "that the preamble of the Briefs be as *pathetically* penned as the occasion requires, to move people to Liberality upon so pious and charitable a Work."

The Churchwardens' Accounts of this parish, contain much curious matter.

## CHAPTER IX.

## BISHOPS' TRANSCRIPTS.

SEVERAL of the Acts and Ordinances which have been set forth in these Remarks, evince the desire of the Legislative Authorities not only to compel the Registry of the several Ceremonies before alluded to, but also that the records of them should be handed down to posterity; hence the direction that a correct Transcript should be forwarded to the Bishop of the Diocese;---a most excellent provision, which, in case of fire happening in the Vicarage or Church, or any other accident or circumstance destroying the Parish Register, would still afford the same evidence as if the originals had been extant; besides which, a check is given to any alteration, erasure, or forgery; and it cannot but be evident, that a record of so much importance as a Parish Register should not be subject to destruction. Although the Act of Parliament passed during the Commonwealth, did not provide for this transmission of a Transcript to the Bishop, yet it directed that the Clerk of the Peace should enter the Certificates of Marriages, "to be kept amongst the records of the Sessions."

In a cause which occupied the attention of the Court of Chancery for some time, the late Lord Chancellor (Eldon) remarked, that none of the Parish Registers had been kept until then, according to law; that in the Chandos case, in the House of Lords, one Noble Lord was disposed, on that ground, to reject a great number of them, as not

having been kept according to the Canon.<sup>(1)</sup> The House however, thought that the subject having fallen into so loose a state, could not in that instance be taken with such strictness; his Lordship also remarked, that from what passed in that case, there was since considerable security for the authenticity of evidence of pedigree in future, as partly upon his (Lord Eldon's) suggestion, the Bishops came to a determination to require the annual transmission of the duplicates. What the result of this determination has been, will be presently seen.

These Transcripts, it will have been already observed, were first ordered in the year 1597, and subsequent ordinances have not omitted to direct their punctual transmission. It is however certain, that in some Dioceses no attention whatever has been paid to the subject, and in no individual Diocese are the Transcripts perfect.

Dr. Prideaux, in noticing the order for transmission of a copy to the Bishop's Registry, remarks, that it is---

"The foundation on which bills indented of all Christenings, Marriages, and Burials are given in at every Easter Visitation by the old Churchwardens on their going out of their office, although through the neglect of the officers, the said Bills are never sent into the Bishop's Registry, but usually after the Visitation is over are thrown by and no more taken care of, whereby the intent of the Canon is wholly defeated, which was, that a Register should be kept in general for the whole Diocese in the Bishop's Registry, in the same manner as is in every particular Church for the Parish belonging thereto."

The First Report of the Committee on Public Records states that

"The importance<sup>(2)</sup> of a regular transmission of the Copies

(1) In the cause of *Huet v. Le Mesurier*, 1 Cox 275, Lord Kenyon rejected a Register of Baptism in Guernsey, on the ground of the ecclesiastical jurisdiction not extending to that Island, and required further evidence in proof of the Petitioners having attained twenty-one.

(2) In France two copies of every Entry of Birth, Marriage, and Burial are made, and every leaf signed by the President of the Tribunal of First Appeal, and

of Parish Registers, in every Diocese, to the Diocesan or his Chancellor, which, by the Canons of 1603, ought to take place annually, having engaged the attention of your Committee, they directed inquiries to be made upon this head, and although they have the satisfaction to find that, upon an average of the last ten years, these copies have been regularly transmitted annually, by nearly all the parishes in 16 out of the 26 Dioceses in England, and triennially in two or three Dioceses, yet it appears that a very large proportion of the parishes in each of the remaining Dioceses have neglected to comply with this salutary regulation, which, considering the great utility that may be derived from it, in guarding the evidences of title and pedigree from spoliation or confusion, ought in all instances to be completely and punctually enforced."

In the districts of Bath and Wells, there was lately a deficiency in the annual returns of 430 out of 490. In that part of the Diocese of Winton, in the County of Surrey, containing about 142 parishes, there are only 20<sup>(1)</sup> duplicate Registers for all those Parishes from 1597 to 1800; and as every Parish ought to have annually remitted a copy of its Register for the previous 203 years, there is a deficiency in this district only of 28,806 Registers.<sup>(2)</sup>

The following Table (taken from Mr. Grimaldi's work) will show the state of some of the Bishops' Archives, with respect to these Transcripts.

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at the end of each year the Registers are closed by the Mayor, and one copy is deposited in the Archives of the Mayoralty, and the other at the Register Office of the Tribunal of First Appeal.

(1) These are not with the Bishop's Registrar; but are in a chest in the vestry room of St. Saviour's, Southwark, where they stand a great chance of being altogether lost, unless some measure is taken for providing a place of security, where all the Transcripts of the Archdeaconry may be kept together. The whole County of Surrey, with the exception of nine peculiars, is in this Diocese, and includes the very extensive and populous parish of Lambeth. The Registrar, Mr. Rothery, is, at his voluntary trouble and expence, arranging the Transcripts subsequent to 1812, and making applications to those parishes which are in arrear; but even these, when collected and arranged, will occupy much more space, even in a large set of offices, than it may be convenient to spare; and every year will be increasing the inconvenience.

(2) Grimaldi, Gen. Adj.

	Date of earliest Trans- cript	Parishes in Diocese	Number of Parishes transmitting Duplicates in 1800
Dean and Chapter of York ..	1660	90	perfect
London .....	....	....	It has not been the custom for many years, for the Clergy of this Diocese to transmit Duplicates. There are, however, a few odd Transcripts of early date.
Durham.....	....	195	147
Winton .....	....	324	nearly perfect
Lichfield and Coventry .....	1660	....	ditto
Lincoln County.....	1587	....	ditto
Leicester Archdeaconry.....	....	231	nearly complete
Bath and Wells .....	....	480	50
Gloucester Archdeaconry ....	....	199	perfect
Same ditto .....	....	142	ditto
Worcester .....	....	251	181
Hereford .....	1660	323	323
Salisbury .....	....	434	9 or 10
Norwich.....	....	1237	the returns are to 4 archdeacons
Carlisle .....	....	191	101
Bristol .....	1731	204	perfect
Rochester .....	..	95	7
Ely .....	1600	156	nearly perfect
Chester .....	1650	269	perfect
Gloucester .....	1571	....	nearly perfect
Oxford .....	....	314	150
Peterborough <sup>(1)</sup> .....	....	330	225
Exeter .....	....	....	.....
Bedford Archdeaconry .....	....	120	nearly perfect
Huntingdon Archdeaconry in Huntingdonshire .... }	....	91	85
Ditto in Hertford .....	..	77	74
Richmond Archdeaconry ....	....	84	84

(1) At Northampton the earliest Transcripts are those of 1704. They are now regularly sent in by all the parishes within that jurisdiction; for when any are back-



But let the same calculation as that made with respect to the Diocese of Winton, extend to all the Dioceses in the kingdom, and the result will be a deficiency of perhaps not less than 275,860 transcripts; and then consider the merits of the Law directing transcripts to be made and preserved. If it is a troublesome and useless provision, let it be discontinued, and let the contents of every Parish Register be open to the ingenuity and devices of evil-disposed persons, without the chance of detection and check, (which this law, if complied with, affords) let the Registers themselves perish, and their valuable contents be irrecoverably lost to posterity. But if the provision be prudent and useful (and this all who give the subject consideration must admit), how deplorable is it that it should become a dead letter; that a regulation of upwards of two hundred years standing, and so excellently adapted for the public good, should be disregarded with impunity; and that such measures should not be immediately taken, as will cause it to be universally and strictly observed.

It seems, however, that even if Government should interfere to compel the transcripts to be sent in, the object of the Canon of 1597 will not be attained, unless the transcripts, which for so many years have been neglected, should also be transmitted; (1) for so long as this is not

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ward, the Registrar writes to the churchwardens of the parish, intimating, that unless sent in by a specific day, the neglect will be reported to the Bishop, and *fortunately*, this threat has had the desired effect. Mr. Yates, the Registrar of Northampton, has at his own expence, built a fire-proof building, for the preservation of these documents as well as for original wills and terriers. The Transcripts are tied in bundles, according to their respective parishes, and are placed in alphabetical order; but the services of a Clerk are required, for the exclusive purpose of attending to this department, in order to carry the directions of Mr. Rose's Act into execution.

This is also the case at Rochester: there the earliest Transcripts are in 1715, the Registrar says, "There is sufficient accommodation for the preservation of the Registers now in the Registry; but not for the arrangement of them in future, supposing the Act of 52 George III were in full operation. The building is kept in repair by me."

(1) This completing of the Bishop's Transcripts was noticed in a pamphlet published in 1784, intitled, a "Plan for carrying into execution a *General Register*, to

done there cannot be that which Dr. Prideaux alludes to, viz. "a Register in general for the whole Diocese in the Bishop's Registry, in the same manner as in every particular Church, for the Parish belonging thereto." It is true, that in large parishes the expense of preparing these copies would be considerable, and might be considered as an useless tax upon the parish funds; but it should also be considered that the parish would only be doing in 1829 what it was their duty to have done many years since, and to which their attention has been called, by repeated Acts of Parliament, Canons and Injunctions, and also by the Charges which have from time to time been delivered by the Bishop of the Diocese to the Clergy.

In the Chandos Case a marriage was proved by the Transcript from the Archbishop of Canterbury's Registry, of the Register of Owre in Kent, the original Register having been lost; and the Committee of Privileges not being satisfied with the appearance of the Register of Maidstone for the year 1603, required the production of the Archbishop of Canterbury's transcript of the Register, which was found to correspond; but in the claim of Charlotte Gertrude M'Carthy in 1825, to the Stafford Peerage, the Duplicates of the Registers were called for, and forgery in the originals thus discovered.<sup>(1)</sup>

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be established in London or Westminster, of Births, Marriages, Burials, Letters of Attorney, Seamen and Soldiers' Wills, and Powers of Attorney;" and the writer does not seem to hesitate in imposing on the parish the expence; and when (in addition to the other reasons before stated) it is considered, that such Transcripts will be preserved for the benefit of the Descendants of those persons named in such Transcripts, it will be seen that the parishioners are only paying for that which it is their interest to pay for.

N. B. The writer of this pamphlet (Mr. Box) appears to have been the individual who suggested the tax on Births, Marriages, and Burials, which in 1784 gave so much offence, and in 1794 was repealed.

(1) Vide minutes in the Stafford peerage case; where it will appear, that the Parish Register was allowed by the Clergyman to be taken away by a person who came to search for entries; that he requested permission to examine them in private, which was granted, (although even his name was unknown to the Clergyman) and he was absent with it an hour.

An appeal was also once made to the Registry of Sarum, upon a suspicion that a Parish Register in that Diocese had been altered; when, upon comparing it with the transcript, it appeared that the true name had been altered to another, by an erasure of two letters, and by inserting upon that erasure three other letters instead.

Within the last five or six years, the usefulness of these transcripts have been fully proved, they having been repeatedly produced in the courts of law, as evidence of forgery of Entries in the original Register.<sup>(1)</sup>

There are many parishes whose Registers have been lost, and yet the parties interested are not without evidence of the contents of them, in consequence of Transcripts having been transmitted from year to year. And when the subject is well considered, the necessity of inflicting a penalty on Parish officers, who neglect this duty, will be apparent, especially when the fact is indisputable, that it is still neglected.<sup>(2)</sup>

The Act requires that the Transcripts shall be made on parchment, in the same form as prescribed in the schedules annexed to the Act, but it does not enact that they shall be of the same size, and entered in the same way. The consequence as to the latter point, and the fact as to the whole, is, that the Transcripts sent in are some on paper and others on parchment, some entered on parchment of one size and some on another, some written lengthways and others crossways; all these varieties, together with the very

(1) This was the case in a late cause of Doe dem. King and White v. Farran, tried at Chelmsford, at the late Lent Assizes 1839. A true bill has since been found against an individual for the forgery; but as he has absconded, a conviction will not, perhaps, take place.

(2) At Canterbury, for a period of a few years, there were two visitations in the year at each of which, a Transcript of the Register for the whole of the preceding year, was sent in, so that there were two Transcripts of the same Entries during that period. But about 1715 the visitations in the Diocese of Lichfield were triennial.

bad writing of a few, tend to augment the difficulties which otherwise present themselves in any endeavour to arrange and preserve these Transcripts in uniform order. This is the more necessary, as the 12th clause of the Act, requiring that the Registrars shall make correct alphabetical Lists of the names of all persons and places mentioned in the Transcripts, has not been complied with. So far indeed from this, that in some Dioceses, the Transcripts are piled one upon another, in bundles containing the Transcripts of the respective years,<sup>(1)</sup> so that a search for the Transcripts of the Register of any given Parish, would be a work of time and trouble, without taking into consideration the trouble of finding any particular entries in such Transcripts when collected.

The expence of receiving<sup>(2)</sup> the Transcripts at the Bishop's Registry, and of afterwards arranging, indexing, and preserving them, is not provided for by any allowance to the Bishop, or by any fees payable by the parishes on sending them in; neither are the fees for searches, at all sufficient for this purpose, for in many Dioceses they do not exceed a few pounds. Add to this, the defect in the Act of 1812, which does not give the Bishop the power of compelling the transmission, nor provide a penalty for the neglect of it, and it will not be at all surprising, that the

(1) This is stated from personal observation. Bigland also mentions having seen in the cathedral church of——, under a staircase, in a place on the north side of the north Isle, upon the damp ground, without the security of a door, a promiscuous heap of Transcripts from different parishes, and exposed to destruction, either from damp or other casualty.

(2) The Transcripts, properly directed, are received postage free; but when the parishes neglect the formal direction required by the Act, the postage is charged, in which cases, they are not taken in by the Registrar, and this causes the loss of many. From an interview, however, which the author has had with the Secretary of the post-office, there is no doubt, but that the postage will in future be returned, on its being shewn what the enclosure was; and as these Transcripts are transmitted at one particular period of the year, the trouble of obtaining a return of the postage would be inconsiderable.



intentions of the Act, as regards the Bishop's duplicates, are far from being complied with.(1)

The great usefulness of these Transcripts, the necessity of their being annually sent in, arranged and indexed, cannot but be apparent to every person who has considered the accidents and abuses to which Parish Registers are exposed. It becomes then a serious inquiry, whether the Legislature should not interfere to *compel* a strict and punctual compliance with the clause, directing their transmission; and whether it should not protect the interests of the public, by imposing a penalty(2) on the neglect of it, the amount of which penalty might be applied towards defraying the expence the Bishop might incur, in carrying the intention of the Act into complete effect, so far as regards these duplicates. The subject is one of the utmost importance; for if it has been thought expedient, by a succession of Canons, Acts and Ordinances, for nearly 300 years, to institute and continue Parish Registers for the purpose of the public benefit, it must be allowed that the observance of so excellent an enactment as that which tends to preserve them

(1) Without referring to the period antecedent to the passing of the Act in 1812 (up to which time, *none* of the parishes in the Diocese of London had been accustomed to send Transcripts to the Bishop's Registry) it is believed to be a fact, that the populous parish of St. Luke has not sent any Transcript since 1815; the parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch, since 1831; and the parish of St. Matthew Bethnal Green, has never sent any Transcript whatever; and the Bishop's Registrar has not the means of compelling it or of punishing the neglect. The Churchwardens of St. Luke's provided parchment for the Transcripts for the year 1813, 1814 and 1815, and the parish clerk transcribed the Register, but as he could not obtain any remuneration for his trouble (although he only required five guineas per annum) he has discontinued to transcribe, and the consequence has just been stated. It should be observed, that the entries of baptisms, marriages and burials, in the parish of St. Luke, amount together to nearly 2000 annually. Those Leonard Shoreditch, must be still more numerous.

(2) The only penalty imposed by the act of 1812 (by which Parish Registers are now regulated) is that of transportation for fourteen years: and, by a subsequent clause, it is enacted, that one half of all penalties shall go to the informer, and the remainder to the poor of the parish, or to charitable purposes!



unobliterated and unaltered, for the inspection of posterity, should be strictly enforced.

It has been already stated, that no provision is made for the expences occasioned to the Bishops in preserving the Transcripts: the act of 1812, however, lays down a proceeding for the purpose of remunerating the officers in each Registry, "for their additional trouble and expence in carrying its provisions into execution,"<sup>(1)</sup> and for providing proper buildings for the reception and preservation of these records. Application has been made by the Author, to the Privy Council Office, to ascertain whether the Bishops, in conjunction with their Chancellor and the Custos Rotulorum of the County, had made any survey and report, and it is found they have not. It appears, therefore, that if the Registrars remain unremunerated for their additional trouble and expence, they must not complain of the Legislature, while the 13th clause of the Act is uncomplied with.

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(1) It is calculated, that there are about 576 parishes in the Diocese of London, the population is about 1,500,000, and the entries of baptisms, marriages and burials, about 60,000. If, therefore, the churchwardens, on the transmission of the annual copies, paid to the Registrar a fee of 2s. 6d., and 2d for every entry contained in the copy so sent, it would produce a sum of near £600 per annum, which would be ample for the purpose of carrying the intentions of the Act into effect.

## CHAPTER X.

### OF REGISTERS OR KIRK SESSION RECORDS IN SCOTLAND.

By the population abstract, published in 1801, it is stated that out of the 850 parishes in Scotland, that made returns to Government, only 99 were in possession of regular Registers, the rest having made only occasional entries therein, or keeping no Register whatever; and as to marriages, they were sometimes entered in many Registers, and sometimes in none.

The report of the Deputy Clerk Register of Scotland, to the Commissioners of public Records in 1810, "as to the parochial Registries of births, marriages and deaths throughout Scotland," remarks, that "These are nearly coeval with the present ecclesiastical establishment of the country, and of their great utility and importance, there is, and can be, but one opinion, either in reference to private individuals whose rights and interests are often dependent on the information they afford, or on public grounds, in illustration of the progressive population and political state of the Kingdom. It is, however, I believe, a matter of great and general regret, that the regular formation and safe custody of these small local Records have been hitherto so little attended to, and so imperfectly provided for. They are committed to the immediate care and superintendence of the Kirk Session of each parish, consisting of the Minister and certain lay elders, and the Sessions

Clerk, (who is usually the established parochial school-master,) is the proper officer to whom not only the proper formation, but also the custody of this record is committed. It is certainly in the power, and it is the proper province of the Kirk Session, to see that this record is faithfully and regularly-framed, to take care that it be not unnecessarily exposed to hazard, and that, in passing from one sessions clerk to another, no part of it be lost or mislaid. Yet, when it is considered, that in comparatively few parishes are the existing Records of greater antiquity than the beginning of the last century, and many of them much less, it must be manifest, that the present system of custody is altogether unsafe and improper; and without going further into the sources of the original imperfection of such Registers, under the present system, it might be sufficient to mention, that they exclude nearly the whole of those who are religious Dissenters from the Established Church of Scotland."

A plan was established respecting these Registers, by an act of the Privy Council of Scotland in 1616, when an Episcopal form of Church Government existed; but a friend of the author's (a Writer to the Signet) writes, in 1828, "I can't find any thing that relates to this plan, all I can say is, that the system in Scotland *now*, is the worst possible."

From Sir John Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, some idea of the state of the Registers in that Kingdom may be formed. Prior to the publication of that work, but very few Registers of burials were kept; one great difficulty being the custom of persons to carry their deceased relatives to their native parishes, or the burial place of their ancestors; another obstacle was, that many parishes had as many as six, seven, or eight different burial places, and the only memoranda of burials were the entries made of money received for the use of the mort-cloth (or pall;) but these did not comprise all the burials, as it was not customary to charge the poor for the mort-cloth, and it was not used for children under ten years of age. Added

to this, in some parishes private mort-cloths were kept and let on hire, at a cheaper rate than those belonging to the parish.<sup>(1)</sup> With respect to the Register of Baptisms, this may be considered to have been the most correctly kept, though in some parishes, where a small population was scattered over a large tract of country, it had been neglected. The Registers of Marriages has been also badly kept; and nearly all the irregular,<sup>(2)</sup> or o'er-the-march, marriages have been unregistered. But a chief hindrance to the correctness of Parochial Records generally, was the act of parliament in 1783, imposing a tax of three pence on every entry of burial, &c.; for however unpopular this tax might have been in England, it was more so on the other side of the Tweed. It is stated that it was there considered, as to the burials, a tax upon the misfortunes of the community, and that they exclaimed, in the sentiment of *Bajaculus*, as mentioned by Tacitus, "*Deesse terra in qua vivamus, in qua*

(1) It appears, however, that the fourteenth Canon, made and published in Edinburgh, in 1551, did not extend to the Registry of Burials: it ordains, "*ut singuli curati deinceps habeant Registrum in quo nomina infantum baptizatorum inscribantur, una cum nominibus personarum, quae tallum baptizatorum parentes communiter habentur et reputantur, nec non compatrum et commatrum, cum die, anno, mense, adscriptis etiam duobus testibus notent; quod etiam ipsum in bannorum proclamationibus servetur, quas præsens conventio in ecclesiis parochialibus tam viri quam mulieris respective, si diversarum fuerint parochiarum fieri mandat; quas quidem registra interpretiosissima ecclesiam localia conservari vult et præcipit, quodque decani in suis visitationibus desuper diligentem indaginem faciant, et deficientes ad coramiasarios referant, ut graviter in eosdem animadvertatur.*" Wilkin's Concilia, vol. 4.

(2) When a young couple meet with any obstacle to their union; when from wantonness or humour, they spurn all regular forms, or when they are too impatient to wait for proclamations, they apply to the procurator fiscal, to get a Justice of the peace to marry them. He instructs them to tell the justice that they were married at such a time; but to refuse the name of the celebrator and witnesses. Whereupon, the judge first discerns them to pay the legal fine, and next, upon a representation of their poverty, &c. by virtue of his or their power, as justice, or justices of the peace modify this fine, sometimes to half a guinea, sometimes to five shillings, and sometimes even to much less. They get an extract of this sentence, pay the procurator fiscal, and the ceremony is over. Sinclair's Scotland.

moriamur, non potest;" besides, the penalty imposed by the Act, was the omission of the entry in the Registry, thereby virtually conferring a premium on every act of negligence or obstinacy, and not only parishes, but whole counties discontinued registering at all. Previous, however, to this act of parliament, there had been a cause which rendered the Registers in Scotland very defective, namely, the Secession in 1732. The Seceders, thinking the Registers an appendage of the Established Church, rather than an institution calculated to promote the interest of their posterity, refused to register the births of their children, some going the absurd length of paying the Sessions Clerk his dues, but forbidding the registration.

With respect to the Registers of Burials in Edinburgh, they have been stated<sup>(1)</sup> to be kept by people whose faculties are impaired by drinking, who forget to day what was done yesterday, people who have an interest in reducing the list of burials, as thereby they may speculate the share of *mort-cloth*(<sup>2</sup>) money, due to the charity work-house. Besides, they enter not into the list of burials any who have died without receiving baptism,<sup>(3)</sup> nor those whose relations are so poor, as not to be able to pay for the use of a mort cloth, nor those who die in the charity workhouse. As for the register of births, it does not deserve the name; true it is, a list is kept in the south isle of St. Giles's church where any person who chuses to go with a piece of money,

(1) Arnott's History of Edinburgh.

(2) The pall.

(3) At Aberdeen a Register of marriages, baptisms and burials was established, under the authority of the magistrates, immediately subsequent to the Reformation. The session made an attempt, some few years since, to deprive the magistrates of the exclusive privilege of being custodiers of the Register of Baptisms; but this was resisted on their part, and the question being carried before the Supreme Court, by the members of the Church Session: it was found, that as the magistrates had been so long in possession of the Register, they could not now be deprived of the privilege of conducting it, as formerly. Hist. of Aberdeen.



will get the birth and name of a child inserted ; but no attention is paid to the observation of this practice, either by the clergy or by parents.(1)

It has been stated, that there are some strong iron-bound chests, &c. deposited in a corner of this church which have remained undisturbed many years, and they may contain more ancient registers.

The author having seen but two Scotch Registers, is unable to add his testimony to the above statements: those he has seen were the Register of Anstruther Wester, which commences in 1578, and that of Pittenweem, both in Fifeshire. The former now consists of several volumes, as the Rev. Mr. Carstairs, the present minister, recovered the oldest of them and another ; the one was found lying about in the house of a deceased clerk of session, and the other among the records of Anstruther Easter. They are all now preserved by Mr. Carstairs, at the Manse, with the exception of the book in present use, and which is kept by the Session Clerk, who is the village schoolmaster.

With respect to the Registers of Pittenweem, they have been kept in a very neat and uniform manner ; they are in possession of Mr. Simpson, the Town Clerk.

The following extracts may be acceptable from these two books ; but it may be first noticed, that the Church of Pittenweem has recently been repaired ; in doing which, nearly all the monumental stones appear to have been removed. It is the practice in Scotland, to inter their Ministers in the Church, immediately before the pulpit ; but upon a recent visit to Pittenweem, not one such record

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(1) This defect in the Register of Baptisms would not exist to so great an extent, were the order of the Assembly at Edinburgh in 1588 attended to, which directs " That the poor, whether parishioners or resorting to the parish, having women and children, if they report not sufficient testimonials from their parishioners, of the baptism of their children, would be refused ayme by all good and charitable persons."

of a minister could be found, which is rather singular as the one particularly searched for, was that of the Rev. Patrick Couper, who had been one of the Nonconformists, and was compelled by the persecution to leave his country in 1685, for Rotterdam, taking with him his family, and his brother-in-law, Thomas Halyburton, (then a lad, who was educated while in Holland at Erasmus's school, and was some years afterwards Professor of Divinity at St. Andrew's, and the author of that able and elaborate work on Natural and Revealed Religion, written in confutation of the Deism of Lord Herbert and Mr. Blount) Mr. Couper afterwards settled at Pittenweem, and remained there till his death, a period of 48 years, as will appear by the following extracts :—

#### Pittenweem.

" Mr. Patrick Couper late Minister of St. Ninians was settled Minister in this Paroch the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1692 years."

" 1740 June 14<sup>th</sup> which day the Reverend M<sup>r</sup> Patrick Couper Minister of this Parish departed this Life."

" June 15<sup>th</sup> 1693 Baptized to Mr. Peter Couper and Janet Hallyburton a woman child called Sophia."

" 17 July 1708 Contracted Mr. Andrew Burn Minister of the Gospel in the Parish of Anstruther Wester and Janet Couper of this parish, parents consenting consigned their pounds<sup>(1)</sup> and were married the  
of "

#### Anstruther Wester.

" M<sup>r</sup> James Meluil (1) touk his guid ny<sup>t</sup> from yis Co'grega'ion ye said monst of October 1590 ye" and touk him to Kylrynnie to be yair minister. God forgif him yat did sa, for I know and saw

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(1) The famous James Melvil was sometime Minister of this Parish.

(2) Pledges for good behaviour till marriage.

him promes yat he suld never laif ws for any vardlie respect sa lang he lyvit except he var forssit be ye kirk and his Ma: bot nevir being forssit aither be kirk or his Ma<sup>ie</sup> leift wa."

" Apryle 1<sup>st</sup> 1703

" M<sup>r</sup> James Knox Minister of Dunino preached his text Acts cap 20 verse 28 Thereafter w<sup>t</sup> other ten of the Reverend Brethren ordained M<sup>r</sup> Andrew Burn Min<sup>r</sup> of this Paroch who was received by all persons w<sup>o</sup>ut objection."

" Apryle 2<sup>d</sup> 1703.

" After prayer. Sed: M<sup>r</sup> Andrew Burn Min<sup>r</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Rob<sup>t</sup> Wemyss of Grangemoore, Henry Lamonte Thomas Bruce William Allan William Lawson Peter Wilson William Lundin, Elders Who opened the Box and found

Of Silver Money .....	138 13 08
Of Copper money .....	013 06 00
Of Bullion two ounces 13 drop sold for	008 08 00."

" Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> 1712

" M<sup>r</sup> Andrew Burnes Minister and Janet Coupar his Spous had a Child born upon the 24th day of January and baptized day foresaid by M<sup>r</sup> Patrick Couper Minister of Pittenweem named George before these Witnesses, M<sup>r</sup> Robert Baillie M<sup>r</sup> Henry King and M<sup>r</sup> Alex<sup>r</sup> Anderson."

" No<sup>r</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> 1715 In regard the Session has not liberty to meet because our Minister is obliged to withdraw during y<sup>e</sup> prevailling power of a monstrous rebellious Crew,<sup>(1)</sup> appoynted to a distressed person out of y<sup>e</sup> Box 3 Li<sup>b</sup> Scots."

" Oct 19 1716

" After Prayer, Sed: Min<sup>r</sup> Baillies &c. Bayllie Mitchell was sharply rebuked before the Session for his sinful compliance with the Rebels during the late execrable Rebellion in several particulars viz. in his being present at the public Cross of this Burgh the time of proclamation of their Pretender and drinking his health th<sup>r</sup>, and attending and witnessing their solemn rejoicings for their pretended Victories and several other pieces of miscarriage and sinful compliance w<sup>t</sup> notorious design of overturning our present very happy Establishment. The aggravatious circumstances, heinous nature

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(1) The Rebellion of 1715.

and dreadful tendency of this his Sin and how directly this his carriage has been to his Judgment and Character both as a Magistrate and ane Elder was sufficiently and plainly demonstrated and layd before him. All which the said P M acknowledged in all y<sup>e</sup> particulars charged against him and y<sup>e</sup> his Carriage y<sup>r</sup>anent was his great Sin and Infirmity far from his Inclination being forced and compelled y<sup>r</sup>to and professes his grief & sorrow for the same and promises thro' grace to be more circumspect & watchful for the time to come. Sev<sup>l</sup> other Parishioners were rebuked for several particular of their accession to y<sup>e</sup> monstrous Rebellion."

"Nov 10 1716 Christian Lessells sumoned called compeir and being charged and interrogate upon threatning Mallifice to her Neighbour and using charming for the recovery of ane child y<sup>e</sup> was sick, She acknowledges both these crimes and says as to y<sup>e</sup> threatning she was in a passion and confesses her guilt y<sup>r</sup>in and as to y<sup>e</sup> Charm she did it simply and ignorantly being advised y<sup>r</sup>to by a North Countryman."

There are many other curious Entries, respecting the Parish School, &c. shewing the singular customs then in use.

#### Castletown, Roxburghshire.

In the Kirk Session Record is the following minute of 17th January, 1649 :—

"The English Army commanded by Colonels Bright and Pride and under the conduct of General Cromwell, on their return to England, did lie at the kirk of Castletown several nights, in which time they brake down and burnt the Communion tables and the seats of the kirk; and at their removing, carried away the Ministers' books <sup>(1)</sup> to the value of 1000 marks and above, and also the books of session, with which they lighted their tobacco pipes,

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(1) "Thereupon (1650) ensued a pitiful vastation of Churches and Church Buildings. The very sepulchres of the dead were not spared. The Registers of the Church and Bibliothekes cast into the fire."—SPOTSWOOD, *Hist. of the Church of Scotland*.

the baptism, marriage and examination rolls, from October 1642 to September 1648 all which were lost and destroyed."

Auchterhouse, Forfarshire.<sup>(1)</sup> From the old Register.

"On Sunday the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1645 Andrew Smith confeste that hee had carnal copulation with Jein Mores. Sichlike Jo Williamsonne confessed that he had adoe with Elapit Low; therefore they are ordained to mak ther repentance the Sabbath following.

"On Sunday the 1<sup>st</sup> of Junne ther was but anes preaching, because of the enimie lying so neir hand.

"On Sunday the 20<sup>th</sup> of July, there was no preaching, because of the enimie being so neir the towne."

"On the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 1646 there was intimation made out of the pulpit of a fast to be kept on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July. Also the Minister told the people out of the pulpit that, the Earl of Seaforth was excommunicat.

"On Sunday the 7<sup>th</sup> of Januarie 1649 the Minister and twa of the Elders went through the church, after sermon, desairing the people to subscribe the covenant.

"6<sup>th</sup> Januarie 1650. On that day the Minister desired the Session to make search every ane in their own quarter gave they knew of any witches or charmers in the paroch, and delate them to the next session."

"On Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup> of July 1652 Janet Fife made her publick repentance, before the pulpit, for learning M Robertson to charm her child; and whereas M Robertson should have done the like, it pleased the Lord before that time to call upon her by death."

"March 21<sup>st</sup> 1658 The Minister reported, that the Presbytery had given comission to M<sup>r</sup> William Gray and the minister to speak my Lord and my Lady Buchane anent y<sup>r</sup> servant M<sup>r</sup> Douglas, y<sup>t</sup> they would cause her attend God's service on the Lord's Day, or else dismiss her; they promised."

"Nov<sup>r</sup> 1665 Mr. William Skeinner, minister and moderator of the Presbyterie of Dundee having preached, intimat to the congregation M<sup>r</sup> James Campble his suspension from serving the call-

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(1) Vide also the Notice of Session Records, in Wood's History of *Comwall*, 4to.



ing of the ministrie, till the synod assemble of Dundee, for ane fornication committed betwixt him and dam Marjorie Ramsay, Countess of Buchanne; for the qlk, by the said Presbyterie's orden, he begaune his repentance on the pillare, and sat both sermons; and is exhorted to repentance."

"December 24 M<sup>r</sup> James Camphle for ane fornication forsaid, being thryce in the pillare; upon evident signs of his repentance, was absolvit."

"December 21 That day, the Countess of Buchaune, for ane fornication committed with Mr. James Cample her Chaplain, begaune her repentance."

"February 2 1663 All Kirk-sessions are discharged till further orders."

The Gretna-Green Marriages must be too notorious to require any notice here; it may not, however, be out of place to give the form of certificate as used some 40 or 50 years since, together with one of more modern date, which though more correct in the orthography, is equally vile in composition.

"This is to sartfay all persons that my be consernid, that A B from the parish of C in the County of D and E F from the parish of G and in the County of H and both comes before me and declayred themseless both to be single persons, and now mayried by the forme of the Kirk of Scotland, and agreible to the Church of England, and givine ondre my hand, this 16<sup>th</sup> day of March 1793."

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" Kingdom of Scotland

" County of Dumfries

" Parish of Gretna

"These are to certify, to all whom it may concern, that John N . . . from the parish of Chatham in the County of Kent, and Rosa H . . . from the Parish of St. Maries in the County of Nottingham, being both here now present and having declared to me that they are single persons, but have now been married conform-

able to the Laws of the Church of England, and agreeable to th  
Kirk of Scotland. As witness our hands at Springfield this 4<sup>th</sup> da  
of October 1893.

" Witness

Jane Rae

John Ainslie"

" Witness me,

David Lang

John N . . .

Rosa H . . ."

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## CHAPTER XI.

OF THE REGISTERS OF DISSENTERS—QUAKERS—CATHOLICS—JEWS—AMBASSADORS—REGISTERS IN THE EAST AND WEST INDIES, &c. &c. &c.

IN Red Cross Street, Cripplegate, is a Library belonging to the Dissenters, founded by Dr. Daniel Williams, a Presbyterian Minister, who died in 1716. Books are kept here for the purpose of registering the Births of Children, and Protestant Dissenters of all denominations have registered here the Births of their children, from the year 1740 to the present time. These Books are in large volumes, each page being divided into compartments, with printed headings, for the information to be registered, which information is vouched for by a Certificate on parchment, signed by the parents and friends of the parties, and which is also preserved in the Library. The following is a copy of this Certificate :—

" H                      No.

These are to certify that

of

and                      his Wife, who was the Daughter of  
was born at                      in the Parish of                      in the County of  
on the                      day of                      in the Year                      at whose Birth we  
were present.

" We do certify the above-named,                      }  
is our                      and was born at the time                      }  
and place above-mentioned.

"Registered at Dr. Williams's Library, Red Cross Street, near Cripplegate, London, the

"Registrar."

"The above should be signed by two or more persons who were present at the Birth, and if such witnesses cannot write, their marks should be attested by two credible persons. The date of the birth should be in words at length, and not in figures."

This Library contains a very good collection of books, chiefly on divinity, and also some paintings. There are also a few books of Dissenting Chapels, which contain Burials as well as Births, whilst Dr. Williams's Registers are Certificates of Births only.

In the case of *ex parte Taylor*, (1 Jacob and Walker 483) in order to prove that a party had attained the age of twenty-one, an examined Copy of an Entry in the Register of Births of Dissenters' Children kept at Dr. Williams's Library was produced, but the Master of the Rolls thought it was not evidence that the Court could act on.—

In the cause of *Newham v. Raithby*, in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Trinity Term, 1811, an objection was taken to an article in an allegation, which pleaded the copy of a Register of a *Dissenting Chapel*. Sir John Nicholl, in his judgment, observed, "This is not evidence that can be admitted. The Court can only admit Copies of Public Documents which are in official custody. Extracts from a Register of this description must be considered as mere private memoranda—the books themselves, however, may be produced at the hearing of the Cause, and be made evidence to a certain extent, by this means the party will have the benefit of them, though in a different manner from that in which they have now been attempted to be introduced."

In consequence of what took place in *ex parte Taylor*, and also in a Cause in one of the Courts of Common Law, where the Registers in Dr. Williams's Library were refused to be admitted upon the same footing as Parish Registers,

the Committee of Dissenters, from the "three Denominations,"<sup>(1)</sup> took the opinion of several eminent Counsel, as to the efficiency of the Registry, and the means of its improvement. Those opinions concurred; but that of Sir N. C. Tindal, the Solicitor General, is worthy of recital. He did not think the parties would be able, by any mode which they could devise, to put the Register, or the Certificate, upon the same footing as evidence in a Court of Justice, as that in which Parish Registers stand. The latter being made by a person whose public character is acknowledged by the law, in obedience to injunctions which form part of the law of the land, being also the record of an event which takes place openly and in the face of the whole parish, (for such ought baptism to be when regularly administered), being also open to the inspection of the whole parish, and being confirmed by a copy annually sent into the Court of the Diocesan, so as to secure it from any subsequent alteration, must have, both *naturally and legally*, a superior weight to the Certificates prepared as above set forth. That in fact, as to one part of those Certificates, namely, that in which witnesses state they were present at the birth of the child, it would, upon general principles of evidence, be altogether inadmissible, being a mere declaration of a witness not upon oath. The Solicitor General did not, therefore, think the Certificate or the Register would be received as evidence upon the same footing as a Parish Register. But, inasmuch as the Entry is signed by the parents, or one of the parents, it is evidence of the declaration of the parents, that the child is theirs; for an entry by a parent, or any of them, in any book, has always been held admissible evidence in a question of pedigree; and the entry upon the Certificate would be entitled to more weight than the ordinary entry found in a Prayer-Book, Bible, or other book or paper, in which the parents may have been

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(1) Independents, Baptists, and Presbyterians.



accustomed to enter the births of the family, because this entry is made more publicly and solemnly, in the presence of persons who would detect any fraud or inaccuracy at the time it was made. Up to the extent of such evidence, therefore, but not beyond it, the *original Certificates* are admissible testimony in courts of justice.<sup>(1)</sup>

In consequence of this opinion, the system of Registry has been altered altogether,<sup>(2)</sup> and the form distributed to the several congregations is as follows.—

“ Dated the 10th day of *May*, 1826.

This is to certify and declare, that *William* the son of *Thomas Jones*, of *Stone*, in the County of *Stafford*, *Miller*, and *Elizabeth* his wife (who was the Daughter of *Humphrey Sykes*, of *Liverpool*, in the County of *Lancaster*, *Grocer*,) was born at the house of the said *Thomas Jones*, No. 10, in *John Street* in *Stone*, in the County of *Stafford*, on the *tenth* day of *May*, 1825.

■ *Thomas Jones*, } the Parents abovenamed.  
• *Elizabeth Jones*, }

[when the Parents cannot write or sign, † *James Jones*, Uncle to the child.]

We certify and declare that we were present at the Birth of the Child abovementioned; and that such Birth took place at the time and place aforesaid.

† *Mary Hill*, of *Stone*, Spinster, aunt to the child

† *James Ooch*, of *Stone*, Surgeon.

“ N. B. The Registrar attends every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, from Ten till Three, except during August and the Whitsun and Christmas weeks.

(1) It has been repeatedly asserted, and it is generally believed, that the Registers at the Red-Cross Street Library are of equal weight, as evidence, with Parish Registers. To correct this error, therefore, the Solicitor General's opinion has been given at considerable length, in addition to the case of *exparte Taylor*, where the decision of the Master of the Rolls is completely to the point.

(2) The distribution of the new forms to the Ministers of 384 Congregations in London and the several large towns in England, took place on the 31st of January, 1828.

**" DIRECTIONS.**—The above forms are to be had at the rate of One Shilling a Dozen at the Library, by application to the Registrar there (if by letter, post paid), or at the Vestries of most Dissenting Chapels. Fill up both Certificates carefully, 1. with the date when the Certificate is filled up and signed, at the top. 2. The child's Christian name. 3. State whether Son or Daughter. 4. The Father's name, address, and business or profession. 5. The Mother's name, and the name and residence, (if dead, the last residence) and the business and profession of the mother's father. 6. The place of birth, describing at whose house, and where the house is: if the house is in a street or square, &c., and numbered, state the number. 7. The date of the birth, putting the day of the birth in *words*, not in *figures*. Then, 1st, let both parents, if it can conveniently be done, sign each form after the two stars, \* and \*. If either of the parents cannot write, let him or her make his or her mark, some one writing over against each such mark "the mark of....." and in case neither of the parents can write, let some near relation who can write, sign his or her own name on the line below the †, adding to such signature his or her relationship. 2d. Let two persons present at the birth sign after the † and †, adding their addresses themselves, or somebody for them. If the witnesses cannot write, let them make their marks, some one writing over against each mark 'the mark of ..... of .....'

"If both parents cannot sign, let *one* of them do so. If both should be dead, then let the nearest relation who can write sign, as before directed, after the †, and add to his or her signature what relation he or she is to the child.

"It is desirable that the witnesses to the birth, or one of them (where it can be) should be relations of the child; and, where any witness is a relation, let him or her add to the name the relationship thus: "Aunt," &c. (as it may be) "to the child."

"If there are no witnesses to the birth living, or to be found, the Registration may still be made, getting the signature of the parents, or one of them, as above directed. The Registration may take place at any time, if the parties are living who can comply with the above requisites.

"This paper containing *both* certificates, must be taken to the Registrar, who will keep and affix the First in his book (numbering it next after the one last received and registered by him), and deliver

the Second, (the one on this page) numbered and signed by him, to the parties, who can then, if they please, cut off these directions. His fee is one shilling, to be paid when the Certificates are delivered to him for registration."

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It will have been observed, that the system originally was to copy the original Certificates in a book as soon as received at the Library; but in future, the original Certificates, signed by the parties, (and which are on half sheets of stout foolscap paper) are to be bound up together, and form a book; whereby the errors of transcription will be avoided, and the signatures of the parties will always be seen upon reference to the Books.

In substituting paper for parchment, the Dissenters have adopted the course taken by government with respect to Parish Registers, in pursuance of the act of the 52d. George III.; and without again entering into a discussion of the claims of these two articles, as intitled to preference in point of durability, the prudence of the change by the Dissenters will be apparent, when it is considered that these Certificates are to be *made*, or at all events *signed*, by the parents of the child and their friends, who would in most cases be quite unaccustomed to writing on parchment, and therefore ignorant of the process by which parchment is rendered capable of receiving the ink freely.

Some Parish Registers set the Entries of Births, &c., of Dissenters, apart from the rest: thus in the Parish of Foxton, two or three leaves of the Register are styled, "Register of Dissenters begun 1697," and in another part of the same book, "those set down in the Register only born, were baptised by Non-conformist Ministers." Dr. Prideaux, however, censures the practice of receiving Certificates from Dissenting Ministers of Baptisms, and entering them in the Parish Register, "for the sake of a sixpenny or twelvepenny fee."

In the communications from the Committee of Dissenters, to the several congregations, it is remarked:—

"That the whole scheme of Registration of Births, Marriages, and Deaths in this Country appears to be radically defective, not only as being identified with the Establishment, within whose circle a great portion of the community are not comprised, and by whose institutions, therefore, their civil Exigencies cannot be provided for, but also as being in its details defective in many important particulars, even for the limited purposes which it is calculated to serve. That such a reform as could effectually remedy the evils complained of, (many of which affect Churchmen as well as Catholics, Jews, and every denomination of Non-conformists in a greater or less degree) can only be looked at as likely to spring out of a more liberal policy on the part of the Legislature, with regard to the greater questions which affect the political situation of persons differing from the Establishment in matters of faith."

The Births of Jews, Catholics, and Dissenters, forming one sixth of the whole number of Births in London, it will be readily seen, that some method of registration should be established, and recognised by law, which may prevent the grievance of so large a proportion of the population being, as to some of its uses, without registration for their children.(1)

The Registers of Dissenters' Baptisms and Burials are, in many places, very indifferently kept; in one Chapel, established nearly a century, with a numerous and respectable congregation, the Entries have been, for nearly forty years, kept in a small ciphering book, with a great many of the leaves and memoranda loose, and others pinned in; and in a very populous town, where there is a burial ground, used almost exclusively by Dissenters, the Register of the Burials is kept by a carpenter, who employs a painter and glazier to make the Entries.

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(1) Lord Nugent has given notice, in the House of Commons, of his intention to bring in a Bill, in the next Session of Parliament, "for establishing a Register of the Births of children of Dissenters."



*Bunhill Fields Burial Ground, in the City Road.*

This place was first made use of in the year 1665, for the interment of those who died of the plague; since which time, it has been the principal burial place of the Dissenters. It was enclosed with a brick wall in that memorable year, at the expense of the City of London, in the Mayoralty of Sir John Lawrence, Knight; and gates were placed at the western end of it, which were finished in the Mayoralty of Sir Thomas Bludworth, Knight, in the year following. Although there are a great number of Monuments and Tombstones still standing, which were erected prior to the year 1713; yet it is probable, that no Register of Burials was kept until the month of April in that year, as none is now to be found. From thence to the year 1786, it was very negligently attended to, the Entries being frequently made without Christian names, and without due regard to the correct spelling of Surnames. Since that period, however, it has been very correctly kept, and when it is calculated, that more than 100,000 persons have been buried there, all records relating thereto must be of considerable public importance.

Mr. John Rippon, of Great Surrey Street, Blackfriars' Road, son of the Rev. Dr. Rippon, is in possession of twelve large quarto manuscript Volumes, containing a verbatim Register of burials there, from its commencement down to the present time; as also verbatim and precise lineal copies of Inscriptions, on nearly all the monuments and tombstones which have ever been erected since the year 1665, exceeding in number 5000, collected at immense labour and expense, by annual surveys during the last forty years; all of which are chronologically and alphabetically arranged, with the respective situations of every one of such of them as are now standing, according to certain geographical compartments specified upon the walls, whereby great facility of search and identity have been attained. As great numbers of them have perished from the effects of time and weather, and many others



have occasionally been sold to new proprietors, or received new inscriptions, and as the Register of Burials is very defective, the Volumes in this Gentleman's possession, are, in several hundreds of instances, the only evidence of interments there, and must be highly valuable, inasmuch as they contain all the particulars of family and connexions which such monuments once did or still continue to describe, together with much other information obtained by Dr. Rippon and himself, with a view to a publication of the history of this celebrated spot.

Mr. Rippon has also an Ichnograph of the whole burial ground, upon which is marked the geographical situation of every one of the monuments now standing, together with the name of the Family to whom it belongs: this, with the volumes before referred to, are accessible for searches and extracts, upon payment of certain fees.

#### *Quakers.*

The Society of Friends are particularly careful in causing notices to be sent to their monthly and quarterly meetings, of all *Births*, *Marriages*, and *Burials* of, or connected with, the members of their community.

The Registers for London and Middlesex commence as follows:—

“Births, 3<sup>rd</sup> of 3<sup>rd</sup> month (then called May) . . . 1655.

“Marriages, 3<sup>rd</sup> of 10<sup>th</sup> month (then called Dec<sup>r</sup>) 1658.

“Burials, 8<sup>th</sup> of 7<sup>th</sup> month (then called Sept<sup>r</sup>) 1661.”

These dates are according to the Old Style: the third month is now called March; the tenth, October, &c. &c.

The following are the Rules upon this subject:—

“The method to be observed in recording *Marriages*, *Births*, and *Burials*.

“*Marriages.*

“That in every monthly meeting one or two proper person or persons be appointed to register *Marriages*.

" That two Registers of all Marriages, agreeable to the following form, be signed at a convenient time on the day of marriage by the parties themselves and by three witnesses, the latter to add their places of abode and occupation ; and be carefully delivered to the next monthly meeting ; one of them to be preserved in a proper Book to be kept for that purpose, and the other to be carried to the quarterly meeting, to be fixed into a proper Book and indexed.

" Form of Marriage Registers.

" On the            day of the            month, one thousand eight hundred and            , A B of \*            Son of D E of            in the            of            yeoman, and E his Wife and D E Daughter of M E of            in the            of            , Draper and M his Wife, each took other in Marriage, in a public assembly of the people called Quakers in (or at)            ; in the presence of us.

C F of            , farmer  
G H of            , grocer  
I L of            , mason

This Marriage was solemnized  
between us

A B  
D E."

" Births and Burials.

" That in every particular or monthly meeting, one or two proper person or persons be appointed to give out birth-notes and burial-notes ; also to keep an account to whom such notes are delivered, and make report to the next monthly meeting. The following are forms of the said notes.

" Form of the Birth Note.

" (Two of which are to be properly filled up, inserting the fathers occupation or other usual addition, and signed)

" On the            day of the            month one thousand eight hundred and            was [or were] born at [or in]            in the parish of            in the            of            unto A B of            Draper and C his Wife            who was [or were] named. †

" We who were present at the said Birth, have subscribed our names as witnesses thereof.

\* " Here as also in the Marriage Certificate the occupation or other usual addition, as well as the Residence of the man should be set forth."

† " If more than one child at a birth, the name of the eldest should be placed first."

" Form of the Burial Note.

" [To be properly filled up, inserting the condition of the deceased; as, the Man's occupation or usual addition: also, wife of—widow of—Son of—Daughter of—as circumstances may require.]

To C D Grave-maker

" The            day of the            month, 18  
Make a Grave on or before next            day, in friend's burial ground,  
at or near            , and therein lay the body of A B of            in  
the            of            , draper aged about            , who died the  
                 day of the            month one thousand eight hundred and

" [To be here signed by the friend appointed to give out burial notes.]

" The Body above mentioned was buried the            day of  
the            month, 18            .

" Witness C D Grave-maker.

" [This note to be delivered by the Grave-maker, as soon as may be, to the person who signed it, or the proper meting, for the purpose of making the Register.]"

" When persons not Members of the Society, are permitted to be buried in friend's burial-grounds, it is to be noted in the burial-notes and Register.

" It is agreed that the record of births and burials be made agreeably to the following plans and they are to be recorded by the friend appointed as Register, from the births-notes and burial-notes, after they have passed the monthly meeting.

" No mistake that happens to be made in a record or register is to be erased, but to be corrected by drawing a line through the same, so as to leave it legible: and what should have been written is to be inserted near it, and authenticated by the Register's signing the initials of his name thereto."

" Forms of the monthly Meeting Registers of Births and Burials.

" Births.

When born	Where born	Name	Son or Daughter	Name of Parents	Residence	Description of the Father

## " Burials.

When died	Name	Age	Residence	When buried	Where buried

" Lines are to be printed to separate each Entry in the Registers, and so as to allow sufficient space for making the Entries in two lines where necessary.

" Birth-notes and burial-notes are to be taken to the monthly Meeting, there read, (and the birth-notes compared) and then delivered to the Register; who, after making registers therefrom, is to forward them to the quarterly meeting, at least once within the year, where they are to be fixed into a proper book and indexed.

" The Duplicate birth-note is to be carefully returned from the monthly meeting to the parents, after being examined.

" Burials are to be registered in the monthly meeting in which the burial-ground is situated; and if the deceased were not a Member of such monthly Meeting, the burial-note is to be afterwards forwarded to the monthly meeting to which such deceased person did belong; to be there also registered, and sent from that meeting only to the quarterly meeting. But seeing every monthly meeting in the quarterly meeting of London and Middlesex hath not a burial-ground of its own, it shall suffice that burials in that quarterly meeting be registered in the monthly meeting to which the deceased did belong, and the burial-notes taken thence to the quarterly meeting.

" Particular meetings are at liberty to keep Registers of births and burials, provided care be taken to send the birth-notes and burial-notes to the monthly meetings, to which the particular meetings belong.

" Children born of parents who have been disowned, ought to be registered, upon application made for that purpose; and in making such registers it should be noted, that those children were born of parents out of unity with us; and it shall in no wise be esteemed a title to membership.

" In future the addition of the common names of the months is to be omitted in all our marriage-certificates, birth-notes and burial-notes."

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But although so particular in recording these events,

the Society of Friends disapprove of tombstones, monuments, inscriptions, &c., and many were removed in consequence of an *Advice*, dated 1717, for that purpose.

CATHOLICS AND AMBASSADORS' CHAPEL REGISTERS.

The Portuguese Ambassador's Chapel.<sup>(1)</sup>—These Registers commence in 1660; the modern Registers are carefully preserved, while those of more ancient date are thrown negligently in a cupboard of dirt.

French Ambassador's Chapel. These commence in 1793. The Register Book of Baptisms and Marriages, from 1723 to 1796, is in possession of the French Consul, in Great Winchester Street, and the entries of Marriages contain the place of birth of the parties and their parents' names.

Spanish Ambassador's Chapel.—These commence in 1732.

Bavarian Ambassador's Chapel.—These in 1748; all the previous ones were lost in the riots in 1780.

Sardinian Ambassador's Chapel.—All the Registers, prior to 1761, were destroyed by a fire in 1760; but there are, at the commencement of the present books, about six pages of Registers, from the year 1732 to 1760, being some copies from a book saved out of the flames.

St. Mary's, Moorfields.—Contains the Registers of the chapel formerly in Whitecross Street. All the records prior to 1763 were destroyed in the riots in 1780.

St. Patrick's, Soho Square. These Registers commence in 1792, when the chapel was erected.

German Chapel, Bow Lane, Cheapside. This chapel has been erected but a very few years, and the congregation is so small that the Registers are scarcely worthy of notice.

(1) The particulars of the Registers at the Ambassadors' Chapels are taken from Grimaldi's *Geneag. Adjut.*"



The Chapel in the London Road, Southwark. This chapel being situated in a neighbourhood almost entirely new within the last fifty years, the Registers do not commence earlier than 1788.

The custom of inserting in the entries of baptism, the names of the godfathers and godmothers, exists in all the Catholic Registers; and it is to be regretted that this is not practised by Protestants, as it might frequently be the means of assisting the proof of identity of the party baptised.

The form of these Entries is thus :—

“ Die 4<sup>o</sup> Februarii 1828 nata et Die 27 Februarii 1829 baptizata fuit Joanna filia Jeremie Donovan et Marie (*olim Sullivan*) conjugum—Patrinus fuit Jacobus Donovan—Matrina Birgitta Connor,”

a me D M<sup>c</sup> Donnell

Misr<sup>to</sup> Aposti<sup>o</sup>.”

The deaths of Catholics in England are generally registered in the Catholic Chapels, notwithstanding the Burial is entered in the Register of the parish where they are buried.

The Roman Catholic Clergy in Ireland have not, until lately, been accustomed to keep any Register whatever.

With respect to *Ireland*, the Commissioners for Public Records in that Kingdom were desirous that the Act of the 52d George III. should be extended to Ireland ; (1) and

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(1) With reference to Dublin, Whitelaw and Walsh's History of that city (1818) observes, that “ in Cities where births and deaths are faithfully registered, the number of inhabitants may be estimated with a degree of accuracy that approximates truth, but in Dublin, this resource totally fails. In the Established Church, the Parish Registers have been for many years shamefully neglected; and though latterly more attended to, in consequence of the repeated Injunctions of the late Archbishops of Dublin, yet from the number of children still baptised in private houses, and the very great number of poor persons buried in Cemeteries without the City, they are still very defective: Protestant Dissenters, Quakers excepted, are equally inattentive to

afterwards, finding it had passed, and that it did not so extend, it was ordered by the Commissioners, that the Lord Chancellor should be requested to communicate with Government for the purpose of obtaining some legislative measure for carrying into full effect their recommendation. But it is believed that this has not been attended to.<sup>(1)</sup>

#### OF THE REGISTERS OF PERSONS BAPTIZED, &c. ABROAD.

##### *The West Indies.*

The Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials in the West Indies are kept according to the forms in use in England, but no Transcripts are made and deposited, according to the practice here; by which means the Registers are liable to loss, interpolation, and alteration, without the facility of detection which a Transcript affords. In addition to this, it becomes necessary, whenever an extract is desired, to send to the West Indies to obtain it, a process attended with expence, delay, and trouble.

##### *The East Indies.*

The Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials in the East, are annually transcribed and remitted to the East India House, in Leadenhall Street. The Transcripts from Bombay commence in 1703; from Bengal, in 1713; and from Madras, in 1743, and continue to the present time. The Registers of the ceremonies performed at the out-stations are sent to the Presidency, and transmitted to this country with the rest. But the officers at the East India

this business, and Roman Catholics, who constitute so large a portion of the population of this City, keep no Register whatever."

(1) In 1634, certain Constitutions were made by the Archbishops and Bishops, and the rest of the Clergy of Ireland, one of which (the 46th) directs the keeping of Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, in nearly the same words as the Canons made in England in 1603. Wilkin's Concilia, vol. 4.

House complain of the want of formality in these Registers ; some being kept very well, and containing many particulars, while others are equally defective. The Registers of Baptisms abound with instances of illegitimacy. An Entry of Burial, and one of Marriage are added as specimens.—

" Nagpore.

Burials, 1824.

When buried	Name	Age	Rank	By whom
23 Feb <sup>ry</sup>	Moses Whitehouse	24 years	Private Grenadier Comp <sup>y</sup> H C B European Reg <sup>t</sup>	Lieut <sup>t</sup> Matthie H C B : E <sup>st</sup> Reg <sup>t</sup>

*Agra.*

Donald M<sup>c</sup> Leod, Sub Conductor of Ordinance H C S, and Mary were married (they having been married at Goa by the Act<sup>d</sup> Adj<sup>t</sup> of the Kings 78<sup>th</sup> Reg<sup>t</sup> of Infantry but no Certificate being in Existence) on the 23<sup>d</sup> day of March 1824 at Agra  
by me John Irving

Chaplain.

'This Marriage was solemnized } Donald M<sup>c</sup> Leod  
between us } Mary's X mark

In the presence of

- W<sup>m</sup> Lonsdale Q<sup>r</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Serj<sup>t</sup>  
W<sup>m</sup> Surgoyne Chaplain's Clerk  
Julia X Jones' Mark"

At the Registry Office of the Bishop of London, in Doctor's Commons, are the Registers of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, performed by Clergymen belonging to the Suites of English Ambassadors, &c. abroad. The particulars of them are as follows. Those from Lisbon are deposited at the Vicar General's Office.

Antwerp	1819 to 1821	Hamburg	1820 to 1825
Boulogne sur Mer	1815 to 1825	Moscow, English Con- } gregation at <sup>(1)</sup>	1706 to 1827
Brussels	1818, 1821 and 1825	Oporto	1716 to 1822
Brasils Burial Ground } near Bahia }	1821 and 1822	Paris	1816 to 1825
Cronstadt Church	1807 to 1823	Rotterdam (*)	1815 and 1816
Gibraltar	1807 to 1812	General Register	1816 to 1827
Cape of Good Hope	1796 to 1803	Lisbon	1721 to 1793

In 1816 the Lord Bishop having been applied to in numerous instances, to permit the foreign Marriages, Births, and Burials of British Subjects to be recorded in his Registers, permitted this "*General Register*" to be commenced ;<sup>(2)</sup> and it is still continued, and open to the public, for the purpose of recording those events, and Transcripts of the Registers are sent to the Bishop's Registrar, by the Chaplains of English Ambassadors, &c. in various foreign Countries. Some of the clergymen of English Congregations settled at factories, trading towns, and other places in foreign countries, not under the dominion of England, also keep Registers ; but as they are not compelled to do so by law, it cannot be expected that they are either very perfect or correct. The Scotch Church at Rotterdam has a Register, containing Entries of the Baptisms, &c. of many of

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(1) In Russia the greatest regularity is observed by all the parishes throughout that vast Empire in presenting annually to the Synod, tables of Births, Marriages and Deaths, by these means, the population in 1827 was ascertained to be upwards of 53,000,000.

(2) There was a Dutch congregation at Norwich, which had a Register, extracts therefrom, of as early a date as 1593, being entered at the Herald's College.

(3) The following notice was accordingly inserted in the London Gazette, Times and Morning Chronicle of the 23rd of March, 1816.

" Foreign Marriages, &c.

Bishop of London's Registry,

No. 3, Goddallman Street, Doctors' Commons.

The Lord Bishop of London having been applied to, in numerous instances, to permit foreign Marriages, Births, and Burials of British Subjects, to be recorded in his Registry, has permitted a book to be kept therein, in which the memorials of the same may be entered and preserved, at the request of such persons as are desirous thereof."

John Shephard, Dep. Reg."

those who fled from Scotland during the persecution of 1685. The following is one of the Entries from this Register :<sup>(1)</sup>

" 1687 August 21, Jean Couper da to M<sup>r</sup> Patrick Couper and Janet Halliburton. Witnesses, Masters Alexander Hasty and John Havey."

### *Jews.*

As the Jews were expelled the kingdom in 1290, and were not permitted to return till the time of Oliver Cromwell, no particulars of them can be expected during this period; but from the reign of Charles II. their Registers have been kept with great correctness.

The birth is entered at their ceremonial of naming on the eighth day; and all the entries are more minute than those of the Christian<sup>(\*)</sup> Church.

The following is a specimen of the entry of birth at the Hamburgh Synagogue, in Church Row, Fenchurch Street :—

" Julia the Daughter of Jonas ——— and Matilda ——— his Wife of Bevis Marks Saint Mary Axe was born on Wednesday the 23<sup>d</sup> August 1826."

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(1) The Parish Registers of several cities and towns in Holland, Germany, and Switzerland, contain many entries relating to the families of British Subjects, who, at the several periods of religious persecution, have fled to foreign parts, and in particular to Rotterdam, Strasbourg, Zurich, Basil, Geneva, and Frankfort; at the latter place there were in 1555, Sir John Cheek, Sir Richard Morison, Sir Francis Knollys, Sir Anthony Cook, Sir Peter Carew, Sir Thomas Wroth, Dame Dorothy Stafford, Dame Elizabeth Berkley, and the wife of Bishop Hooper.

In Holland, Parish Registers are kept with great regularity. Carr's Tour.

(\*) Grtmahti's Geneva. Adj.



## CHAPTER XII.

OF THE FEES FOR SEARCHES IN, AND EXTRACTS  
FROM, PARISH REGISTERS.

THE subject of the Fees for the performance of the several ceremonies of Baptism, &c., has, from time to time, had the consideration of the proper authorities, although the same Fees are not paid in every parish; but those for the Searches in and Extracts from the Parish Register have been, in a great measure, left undefined, in consequence, perhaps, of the former particular presenting some obstacle to the fixing of any specific sum.

Many complaints have been made in the public papers, and elsewhere, that the demands for the Searches vary so much, that persons desirous of making searches of any extent, are quite at a loss in estimating the probable expence that would attend it. A correspondent in a daily paper, mentions searching the Register of St. M. in Kent, and making memorandums in his pocket book of six Entries of Burials, &c.; that he was engaged in so doing three quarters of an hour, at the most, and was charged 15s, being 2s. 6d. for each extract. In an adjoining church he made a long search, and was charged but 2s. In the first case, he searched in the Clergyman's house, and was attended by him; and in the latter, by the clerk; but as he did not require any certificate, the clerk's presence in both cases would have sufficed.

It might be very inconvenient, perhaps, for a Clergy-

man to attend an hour, and then only receive a trifling Fee; but where the Registers are kept at the Clergyman's house, it would be advisable to allow the clerk access to them, for the purpose of giving the public the means of searching and making Extracts at a moderate expence.

The custom at some churches is to charge 3s. 6d. for the Certificate of Marriage, which appears a heavy charge, and is certainly more than what is demanded in many other Parishes.

In a table of Fees, approved of and signed by the Churchwardens and Overseers of St. Edward's Parish, in Cambridge, is the following Entry :—

“ To y<sup>e</sup> Minister for searching y<sup>e</sup> Parish Register....0 0 4

In another Parish (St. Benedict) is the following :

For searching y<sup>e</sup> Parish Register....Minister.....0 0 4  
And if written by y<sup>e</sup> Clerk.....D<sup>r</sup>.....0 0 2

The value of money has of course been much altered since this Regulation at Cambridge; but it shews that it was then considered necessary to fix a specific Fee for these Searches.

The Fees for searching the Register of St. Lawrence Jewry are sixpence per year, and 2s. 6d. for every Certificate. But when the exact period at which a particular ceremony took place is uncertain, sixpence per year might amount to no inconsiderable sum, and this is therefore an objectionable mode of charging.

The Act of 1812 directs, that “ all due legal and accustomed Fees,” due to any minister for registering or giving copies of such Registrations should remain as before; and in the Vestry Room of St. Andrew's, Holborn, is a table of Fees for that parish, approved by Sir “ Wm. Scott Vicar General,” as follows :—

“ For an Extract from the Register.....2 6

" For the inspection of the Register <sup>(1)</sup> .....	1	0
" Searching the Register for one year.....	1	0
" For every Subsequent year .....	0	4

The sums usually paid by the Herald's College, for making their searches, (which are very frequent) are fourpence per Extract ; but to this plan it may be very justly objected, that a search *might* occupy a space of one or two hours, and only one Extract made. But although this plan is adopted by the College above alluded to, where the payment is left to their discretion, yet they have often to pay, at other times, very large sums on this account, and it would no doubt be the wish of that establishment, that some settled rule should be adopted.

The charge for Certificates of Baptisms and Burials might be easily fixed, as they never exceed three or four lines in length ; and the only scale to be settled would be that for Searches ; and supposing the clerk to have access to the books, his loss of time might be remunerated according to the following table.

For the Certificate of any Baptism, Marriage or Burial, which shall be required to be under the hand of the Rector, Vicar, or Officiating Minister .....	0	2	0
For the like, required to be under the hand of the clerk of the parish .....	0	1	0
For every Search in the Register Books, where the same shall occupy any space of time not exceeding half an hour .....	0	1	0
For the like, not exceeding one hour .....	0	1	0
„ not exceeding one hour and a half .....	0	2	0
„ not exceeding two hours .....	0	2	6
And in like manner from half hour to half hour			

This scale will, it is hoped, be considered sufficiently

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(1) This appears a very vague Item, when there is a charge for one year and more.

liberal, when reference is made to the Fees taken at the Prerogative Office, at the Office of the Consistory Court of the Archbishop of York, at the Office of the Arches Court at Canterbury, &c., where a Search for any length of time, in one day, may be made for one shilling.

The subject of Fees is one intimately connected with the accessibility, and consequent usefulness, of Parochial Records; and it is therefore of great importance. As a general principle, it may be said that Public Records should be open to the inspection of all persons, upon payment of Fees of *no larger* amount than will remunerate the persons having the custody of them for their trouble, and of *sufficient* amount to prevent idle and vexatious applications.

For Burials in Churches large sums are frequently paid, and very properly demanded; and although in some degree foreign to the subject in consideration, the following epitaphs, from their singular composition, may not be thought unworthy of insertion at the end of this chapter.

#### In Kingsbridge Churchyard.

“ Here lie I at the Church Door  
 Here I lie because I'm poor  
 The further in, the more to pay  
 Here I lie, as warm as they.”

In the month of June, 1811, a stone was placed on the south side of the road, opposite the church of Chart Magna, Kent—

“ In memory of Ann West widow, of this parish, died March 10 1800 aged 59 years.

The Reverend Rector being a hard  
 Austerly rigid man  
 Within the Walls of this church yard  
 He will not let me stand  
 Unless a fee be paid to him  
 Two shillings and two pounds

So to the memory of a friend  
I here am now sit down."

West Allington, Devon.

" Here lyeth the Body of  
Daniel Jeffery the Son of Mich  
ael Jeffery and Joan his Wife he  
was buried y<sup>e</sup> 22 day of September  
1746 and in y<sup>e</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> year of his age.  
This Youth When In his sickness lay  
did for the minister Send + that he would  
Come and With him Pray + But he would not ated  
But When this young man Buried was  
The minister did him admit + he should be  
Caried into Church + that he might money geet  
By this you See what man will dwo + to geet  
money if he can + who did refuse to come  
and pray + by the Foresaid young man." (1)

The Author of these Remarks has introduced the subject of Fees, because it has been frequently represented as a subject requiring amendment; but so far as relates to the Searches made for the purpose of this work, he has not (with one exception) paid a single Fee, unless it has been at times when he could only meet with the clerk: upon every other occasion, he has received the most polite attention from the Clergymen he has troubled, and begs to make this acknowledgement of it.

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(1) The deceased died suddenly of a virulent small-pox, and there was no time to procure a minister; and after the erection of the monument, the clergyman, being satisfied that no blame could really be attached to him, refused to have it taken down.



## CHAPTER XIII.

## OF THE UTILITY OF PARISH REGISTERS.

The Inquisitions post mortem having been determined by Act of Parliament, and no Heraldic Visitation having been made since the Revolution, the Preservation of Parish Registers becomes more necessary now than at their first Institution; for they are now the main source whence all questions of descent and pedigree are to be decided.

To this must certainly be added the Information to be derived from Monuments and Tomb-stones, although they are sometimes erroneous, as in the Claim to the Berners Barony, where evidence was adduced before the House of Lords to prove that the time of the death of a party was not as engraved on the Monument.

Parish Registers have already afforded the chief Evidence of Titles to Peerage and Property (1), and there has been scarcely any case in which these Records have not been, more or less, referred to.

The Commissioners for investigating the Public Charities of the Kingdom, have in many instances been assisted by Entries in Parish Registers of the Wills of Benefactors, and by occasional Notices of the appropriation of Charitable Bequests.

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(1) The Lord Chief Justice Best in his Charge to the Jury in the case of the Attorney General v. Oldham, observed, "All the property in this country, or a large part of it, depends on Registers, and we must see our way clear before we shake the authenticity of Registers."

The Reports to Parliament on the subject of the Population of Great Britain were materially assisted by these Records, as are likewise all Enquiries on the Increase or Decrease of Population, on the numerical strength of the kingdom or particular districts, and on the salubrity of particular towns and villages. Dr. Burrows (1) observes, that the work of numbering the population of a great Empire is operose, tedious, and expensive, and generally, after all, incomplete. But if regular and comprehensive Registers of Marriages, Births, Baptisms, and Deaths of persons of all religious denominations were kept and returned at stated periods, how much easier, less expensive, and more accurate will a Census become? May not such Registers even supersede the necessity of a Census? For the increase or decrease of the people may be clearly ascertained by the totals which the aggregate annual returns will exhibit.

These Records are also useful in questions of Settlement, although in the Court of King's Bench, in the case of the King v. North Petherton, (5 Barn & Cres 508,) in order to make out the pauper's father's settlement, it was proved by the production of the Parish Register of Spaxton, that he was baptized in that parish, but there was no other evidence of his having been born there; it was laid down that the Register of Baptism *per se* is not evidence of the place of birth, and Mr. Justice Bayley said, that if the child was then very young, the Register would be *presumptive evidence* that it was born in the parish where it was baptized, but if the child were not then young, the circumstance of its having been baptized in a particular parish would afford no presumption that it was born there. "I do not say," his Lordship remarked, "that a Register of Baptism is not Evidence of the place of birth when accompanied with proof of other circumstances, but taken by itself, it is not evidence of the place of birth."

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(1) Strictures on the Uses and Defects of Parish Registers and Bills of Mortality, 1818.

In questions also of Legitimacy ; although in the entry of the Baptism of a Child, he or she being described as son or daughter of John Smith and Mary his wife, would not be evidence of his or her legitimacy (1).

In the case of *Drake v. Smyth*, (5 Price 369), a Book intitled the Parish Register, produced from a chest in the Vicarage House, and containing ancient Entries respecting Tithes due to the Vicar, one of which Entries purported to be made about 1652, by the Vicar of that time, was admitted in evidence on a question of *tithes* between a succeeding Vicar and Occupiers of the parish.

In the compilation of Topographical Works, Parish Registers have afforded great helps, and (to use the words of an Author in making an acknowledgment of their assistance) " on these original and genuine sources of information, have been principally founded many of those " Volumes."

They are also of great importance in evidencing the Title of Widows to Dower (2); of persons to property by relationship, or as next of kin, or by survivorship (3); of persons

(1) In the case of the Attorney General and Oldham, it was stated that Mr. Rose's Act regulated the Form of entering the Baptism of illegitimate children, the Author has, however, carefully perused the Act without finding it, and believes that no prescribed form exists.

(2) In order to prove that the parties described in the Register are the same parties whose marriage is in question, it must obviously be unnecessary to call either of the subscribing witnesses to the Register ; any evidence which satisfies the Jury concerning their identity must be sufficient, as by proof of the similarity of their hand writing, or that the bellringers were paid by them for ringing after their marriage, or by proof of other circumstances to ascertain the persons.--Phillips' Evidence.--Bull N P. 27.

(3) " To prove the fact of death, we generally have the assistance of Parish Registers of Burials ; but when families have been scattered abroad, and are not of any considerable station in life, those are not always to be found, and sometimes do not ever exist. The reputation, therefore, of the family that their relative went abroad and died there, or inscriptions on tomb-stones, &c. (which are a species of reputation) is sufficient."--Peakes Evidence.--In *Doe v. Jesson*, 6 East 80, the Court held that absence for seven years was sufficient.

The Register of the Navy Office has been admitted in Evidence to prove the death of a Sailor, Bull N P. 249.

coming of age in order to enable them to receive property<sup>(1)</sup>; or as the qualification for office or appointment. In the latter cases the Baptismal Certificate is very generally required, as it is in effecting Insurances on Lives, although the Insurance Offices will generally accept an affidavit of some third person, or even of the party himself, of his age, where a Certificate of Baptism cannot be obtained.

With respect to the evidence afforded by the Fleet Registers and the Registers of other irregular Marriages, it should be remarked, that in the case of *Doe ex dem Orrell v. Madox*, Lord Kenyon observed in summing up; that he admitted in Evidence the Register of the Fleet Marriages, because former Judges had done so; but he desired that his having done so should not be understood as thereby sanctioning their admission, nor should his authority be cited for the purpose in future, as he was of opinion that they were liable to many objections. And in *Read v. Passer*, (Peake, N. P. C. 231.) his Lordship after referring to what took place on the above occasion, said that in a Case at the Shrewsbury Assizes (1794), the Fleet Registers had been admitted by Mr. Justice Heath, but notwithstanding his respect for that learned Judge's opinion, he thought himself bound to dissent, and to give it as his settled opinion, that they were a species of Evidence which ought never to be admitted.—In a Case before Lord Hardwicke, where a Book of this sort was offered in evidence, he tore the Book, and said such Evidence should never be admitted in a Court of Justice, and that Lord Chief Justice

(1) The declaration or written memorandum of a deceased Surgeon, respecting the time of a Birth at which he attended, is admissible Evidence, 10 East 120, and Vln. Ab. E. T. b. 91.

On a question whether a Testator at the time of making his Will was of full age, a written memorandum by his deceased Father, stating the time of his Birth, has been admitted to be good Evidence. Phillips on Ev. p. 180.—*Herbert v. Tuckal* Sir T. Raym. 84.

Though such Declaration would not be admitted as Evidence of the place of Birth. *R. v. Brith*, 8 East, 542.



De Grey had been of the same opinion. With respect to the Entries in the Books themselves, (continued Lord Kenyon) they could be taken in no other point of view than as private memoranda, which were not evidence; but that these Entries were of less legal authority, even than the private memoranda of third persons, inasmuch as they were made not only by third persons, but by persons who knew while they were doing them that they were illegal, and for which they were liable to punishment by the Canons of the Church. His Lordship, therefore, totally rejected them as a species of evidence completely inadmissible.<sup>(1)</sup>

In *Northey v. Cook*, the Marriage in question, was one anterior to the Marriage Act, when Marriages were neither solemnized or registered with the regularity that they have since been, in consequence of that Act. In this case it was stated, that to hold the Certificate of Registry indispensable to the proof of such a Marriage would be absurd, reputation, cohabitation, and mutual acknowledgments sufficiently proving such a Marriage.<sup>(2)</sup>

(1) In the Cause of *Lloyd and Passingham* in 1809, (16 Ves. 59), Lord Eldon said, "I give no opinion that the Fleet Register is Evidence, as a Register; but I am not prepared to say, it may not be received as Evidence of a Fact, and I can suppose a case in which such Evidence might be received. Upon a question of pedigree, would not that entry be admitted, not as a Register but as a Declaration under the hand of a party; or upon an indictment for bigamy, the first Marriage alledged to have been in the Fleet, and Evidence produced that uniformly an Entry of Marriage was made, would not the production or non-existence of such Entry be evidence to the other fact? With respect to the Pancras Register now produced, it appears to be compiled, and a copy from some other book, the Vicar's name at the bottom of several pages being evidently not his own writing. The conclusion upon the affidavits is, that Kendry had gone into the Church with Young, the Parish Clerk, had erased by pumice stone and India rubber (those articles being left upon the Altar) some Entry in the Book, and inserted an Entry of the Burial of Elizabeth Lloyd, and the Birth of the Daughter, Robert Passingham standing outside; but upon inspection, it is impossible not to see that the operation must have been difficult, as no less than three pages must have been obliterated, the names collected on a separate paper, and those three pages must have been written over."

(2) Or probably any Marriage; the Marriage Act having been repeatedly held not to take away the ancient mode of proving a Marriage by presumptive evidence,



With respect to the Certificates of Gretna Green Marriages, it was stated at Doctor's Commons; in the case of *Nokes v. Milward* <sup>(1)</sup>, that the argument of the Plaintiff's Counsel had failed to induce the Court to regard such a Certificate as any proof whatsoever of a Marriage. That even the Certificate of the King himself, under his sign manual was no Evidence of a *mere fact* (*Ormichund v. Baker*, 2 Willes, 549), on the broad principle, that "in judicio non creditur nisi juratis," that it was upon the same principle that Certificates tendered in proof of irregular Marriages had in this Country (for instance of Fleet Marriages, which, though irregular Marriages were still valid Marriages, prior to the Marriage Act) have often been rejected by the Courts of Common Law.

In the Case of the Attorney General v. Oldham, Counsel objected to the Evidence of the Bishop's Transcripts, as being *Copies* not *Duplicates*, but Mr. Baron Garrow considered he was bound to receive it, because it came from the proper custody and purported to be an instrument required by Law to be deposited there, and that the object of these Transcripts would be lost were they not receivable in Evidence, "This is a subject (said his Lordship) which I have considered, perhaps more than I have had an opportunity of considering many other things, and from what I

Vide 1 Bl. Rep. 367. Doug. 171. and Lord Kenyon declared, in a case at Nisi Prius, Esp. 1, 214, that though the Marriage Act has introduced a Register of Marriages, Registration made no part of the validity of a Marriage, but only went in proof of it.

In the case of *Leader v. Barry*, 353, Mingay for the defendant, offered in evidence an examined copy of the Register of a Marriage in the Swedish Ambassador's Chapel at Paris, which Lord Kenyon rejected as no evidence. Lord Kenyon said, that an action for Crim. Con. was the only civil case where an actual Marriage, by producing a copy of the Register, need be proved. The same strictness was required in an indictment for bigamy; but that in every civil case, except that above-mentioned, general reputation, the acknowledgement of the parties, and reception by their friends, &c., as man and wife, were sufficient proof of Coverture.

(1) Addams Rep. vol. ii. p. 386.

have had occasion to observe, I conceive there is nothing of more importance than the endeavouring to deposit in some secure place the Registers of Births, Baptisms, and Funerals. The importance of it was impressed upon my mind, in consequence of what came to my knowledge of the Register of a Parish near London being taken by a man who was at the time the Curate of the Parish, to a public house, where the whole of a page was destroyed for the purpose of introducing one new Register." (1)

"In Claims of English Peerage the rule of the House of Lords ever since the Chandos Peerage Case has been not to receive Copies (2) of Registers, but to require the original parochial Register itself to be produced, excepting that the House has not yet applied the rule to an Irish Register. In the Roscommon Peerage in 1825, Copies of

(1) In *Fairlie and Freeman*, Lord Eldon said, "I recollect a case upon the Circuit that I went, where we tried an Ejectment in a Town that was a County of itself, with respect to a particular property; the Plaintiff in the Ejectment recovered. There was then a Trial as to another part, a very large Estate, which was to take place in the County at large on the next day. Between the evening and the next morning, we sent over to examine the Register Book by the Copies which had been produced on the first Trial, and in consequence of that, they never ventured to go on with the second Trial."

There was a person professing to be connected with the Family of Derwentwater, who produced the supposed Copy of a Register which gave him a connexion with that family and a claim to a very large Estate. It went on for years, and was conceived at the College of Arms to be genuine; but at last the original was seen, and the Copy had no validity at all.

N. B. In these two Cases, Copies of Registers, (not Bishop's Transcripts) are alluded to.

(2) "With respect to proof in the Courts of Law of Entries in public books, it is now clearly settled, that wherever an original is of a public nature admissible in Evidence, an examined Copy will be equally admitted. (*Lynch v. Clarke*, 3 Salk. 153.) The Rule is necessary, as well for the security of the instrument, as for the convenience of the public. (*Phil. on Evidence*.) The Register kept in Churches of Births, Marriages and Burials, by being confined to one place for public satisfaction, the Law suffers the like Evidence to be given of them, as is usually given to a Jury of Records, viz. true Copies examined with the Original. (*Peake's Evidence*.) As to the Registers being public books, vide 3 Lord Raym. 851. 2 Stra. 954. 1 Barn. 455.

Irish Registers having been offered in Evidence, Counsel were informed, that the Committee of Privileges always required the original Registry in Cases of Peerage. And the Petitioner's Counsel having submitted, that the House would not apply that rule to his Case, as it never had been yet applied, (he believed), to an Irish Case, he was informed, that the Evidence might be taken *de bene esse*, but that their Lordships felt a great difficulty in receiving Copies after what had passed in other Cases. The Attorney General submitted, that some means might be devised of enquiring into the authenticity of the particular Register, and on a subsequent day he having again submitted the necessity of requiring the original Registers, since if the rule were applicable to an English Case, it was particularly so to an Irish Case, the Committee informed the Counsel that the Witness who had produced the copies must give further Evidence of their accuracy, and of the state of the Registers.

" In the Marchmont Peerage Case in 1822, Copies of Scotch Registers having been offered as Evidence were objected to, when Counsel having submitted whether there was not a distinction in the Case of Scotch Peerages, were informed that the Committee were not aware that such a distinction had ever been taken, and the same were only received *de bene esse*." (1)

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(1) Grimaldi's Genealogi Adjutor.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

" A consideration (1) of what uses are principally intended and shewed by our present Registers, is most likely to lead to a discovery by what methods the want of them was formerly supplied. The chief, if not only uses, intended, were, the ascertaining descents and kindreds, and these purely for the sake of property; titles to honours have indeed been concerned in them, but as honours were always in some proportion to property, or at least never so much severed from it as to subsist alone, the proof of a title to property, always ascertained the same of its appendages.

Few need be told that times have been, when property in general was very small, and that too very unequally divided. In the times of our ancestors the Saxons, the number of Thanes in each Shire was but small, and these alone seem to have had any independent property or considerable possessions. In the Laws of King Athelstan, no other titles or distinctions of honour are enumerated than Earl, Ealdoram, Heregerassa and Thane; none of these were hereditary or successively appendant to any quantity of possession but the last; all the rest being offices and appointments merely personal. As to Land indeed, the possession of it was almost all strictly hereditary, and not

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(1) Letter from the Rev. George North to Mr. Professor Ward.

devisable to any one else than the next heir in blood, as is enacted by the 37th Law of Alfred, and by some more ancient Law likewise, as is plain from his own will or testament; and as no alienation could be made, even of what was allowed to be aliened, nor possession upon a devise by Will taken, but at a County Court, there was little possibility of a right of inheritance being defeated.

"In the times when Commerce was little or none, and every man lived, as we may say, within his own hedge, when no man could leave the Lordship he belonged to without leave of his Lord (*Lex X. Ed. Sen'*), nor out of his Shire without leave of the Ealderman of it (*Lex 33 Alfredi*) and by the 2<sup>d</sup> of Athelstan, every man was to belong to some Lord, on penalty of being considered as a fugitive or thief; under these circumstances every man's birth and lineage must be known. The arts of fraud in those ages of poverty and simplicity were hardly known: and if we further consider how frequent and public their Courts of Justice were, it was next to impossible that any man's descent and claim could be forgotten, or admit of much dispute. These methods rendered Registers almost needless, accordingly we do not find any remains of such among the Saxons. They were needless in respect of the common people, who were nailed, as it were, by the foot to one place, whose families were insignificant, and whose small dependent properties were protected by their Lords; and the inheritors of the Thanes were registered, and transmitted in the memories of the whole shire, so often meeting in the County Courts; and when any dispute happened and was determined there, to give it a more lasting remembrance and security, it was entered in a concise manner in some sacred Books of an adjacent Monastery, of which sort of Entries are divers instances in *Dr. Hickes's Dissertatio Epistolaris*. Besides as very few among the Saxons had any more than one name, (or if they had, it was no more than barely a patronymic, as *Putting* for *Puttoc suna*, or *Puttoc filius*) no *nomina gentilitia*, or family



name, from thence it was impossible to form a Register to serve such purposes as our present ones do."

Bishop Kennet in a charge (1) to his Clergy observes,

"It is of very great consequence to the good Estate of your Parishes to keep your Register Books in order and safety, and to make your Entries exact in your own hand writing. This serves to the Ecclesiastical purposes of knowing who are born and baptised in our Communion, who are lawfully married according to the rites and ceremonies of the Church, and who have had their Christian burial among you, that it may the better appear whether they died intestate, or what Wills and Legacies they left behind them. Nay, and this is as useful in civil causes, in descents, in inheritance, in minors, and adult persons, in ligature, in matrimony, and lawful issue of it, in decease of friends, in probate of Wills, and the discharge of Legacies, and especially of those to pious uses."

"There could be no wiser institution to preserve the Memorial of things and Men, to do honour and justice to the present generation, and to provide for the benefit of posterity. What I would advise you upon this subject, has been thus worded very well by a learned Serjeant at Law, says he:—

"The Rectors and Vicars of every Parish Church are intrusted with the keeping of the Register Book, appointed by the advice of Lord Cromwell, 30 Henry VIII. Every Minister is bound to Enter and Register there, all Christnings, Marriages and Burials, an office of great Trust, Use, and Benefit to the People, when the same is duly and justly performed; for since Offices and Inquisitions post mortem are taken away by the stat. of the 12 Car. II. the Entries in these Books are now become the Chief Evidence to prove Pedigrees and descents upon which Titles to land do oftentimes depend; therefore it believes all Rectors, Vicars, and Curates, who have the care or custody of them upon every Christening to enter the name of the Child, the day of the month, and the year on which it was born, as well as baptized and whether the first second or third Son or Daughter of the Parents, with the

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(1) Lans. MSS. 957.

Christian and Surname of them both, their place of abode and title or condition. Upon all Marriages the Christian names and surnames of both parties, with those, of the Parents on either side, the places of their several residences and their titles. Also upon all Burials the Christian name and surname of the party deceased, with their title or condition the place of their abode, and the time of their death; the defect whereof has been very prejudicial to many persons, not only upon the proof of their descents, but chiefly upon the tryal of their titles to the Estate of their ancestors, as well by the Father as the Mother's side."

[Then follow certain directions to have the Books of parchment and not paper, and to use good ink, and write plain, &c.] — "One thing more I would intimate to you, that you are not only obliged to enter the day and year of every Christening, Wedding or Burial, but it is left to your discretion to enter down any notable incident of times and seasons, especially relating to your own parish, and the neighbourhood of it, such as Storms and Lightning, Contagion, and Mortality, Drought, Scarcity, Plenty, Longevity, Robbery, Murders, or the like casualties. If such memorable things were fairly entered, your Parish Registers would become Chronicles of many strange occurrences that would not otherwise be known and would be of great use and service for posterity to know. You have had precedents of this kind in Parochial Registers within this Diocese, and they have been cited to very good purpose, by our worthy Brother the Author of the Natural History of this County of Northampton."

"The necessity of public Parochial Registers, more particularly for ascertaining the Marriages, Births, Baptisms and Burials of persons in their respective Parishes, is abundantly evident from a transient view of our ancient English History, which for want of proper names, real dates, and family connections occasionally to be referred to, is oftentimes rendered perplexed and unintelligible, and sometimes altogether inconsistent even with its own Chronology."(1)

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(1) Bigland.

Nicolson, Bishop of Carlisle, in his *English Historical Library*, p. 175, remarks, that they have proved some of the best helps towards the preserving of History, and that their use might be of a yet further extent, if care were taken to register also many other remarkable occurrences relating to the public concerns of the several parishes, as recoveries of Benefactions, Properties in Seats or Aisles, Rights of Advowson, &c. and that it would be the everlasting reproach of the Clergy, if (instead of thus improving the good designs of our ancestors for the continuance of their names and memories) they should omit even that part of their duty which was required by an Ecclesiastical as well as Civil Authority, and record Matters in the Church Books, after such a manner as would only tend to render such Registers monuments of their own negligence.

Among some of the things worthy of imitation in France, the regularity of their Parish Registers must not be overlooked; and the Conscription to which every male is subject, has induced the nation even in times of terror, to observe in them the same punctuality and copiousness which had been originally introduced from genealogical motives; so that it would now be more easy to make out the Pedigree of a Sans-Culotte, than that of a British Peer. In France, in the natal certificate of every child, (for there the *Birth* and not the *Baptism* is registered) are not only inserted the names of both the parents, but where they were born and married. In every marriage certificate are inserted the birth places of both Bridegroom and Bride, the names and birth places of their respective parents; by this method, a descent may be ascertained for any length without cost or trouble.<sup>(1)</sup>

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(1) *Gentleman's Magazine*.

A letter, from a gentleman at the French bar to the author, says, "Registers were kept by the Priests till 1789. In that year the National Assembly created a mayor, with one or several assistants, according to the extent of the borough or town. Besides these, a corporation composed of the most respectable natives of the borough

In submitting the Registers to the inspection of strangers, a degree of caution ought to be used ; and they should always make the search in the presence of the clergyman, clerk, or some other person ; by so doing, any alteration, erasure, forgery, or destruction of the contents of the books by evil-disposed persons, may be prevented.<sup>(1)</sup>

In addition to what has been said in pages 48, 49 and 60, on the mischievous practice of keeping Waste Books or Day Books, it may be observed, that it is the duty of the *Clergyman* to keep the Parish Registers, which is, or ought to be, an *original* document ; but if the Clerk is allowed to make the Entries in the Waste Book, from month to month, and at the end of the year the Clergyman transcribes the contents of it into the Register, the Clerk becomes the Re-

er town. That corporation assembles, under the presidency of the mayor, to deliberate upon the affairs of the town. The Registers, which were formerly kept by the priests, are now deposited at the mayoralty. The Mayor or his Assistant has alone power to enregister, nor have they that power in any other place than the mayoralty. There are three Registers, Baptism, Marriage, and Burial. There must always be two copies of each ; every leaf of them is signed by the President of the Tribunal of first appeal, in the limits of which is the borough or town. The form of Entry is the denoting of the year, day, and hour on which they are received, the christian and surname, age, profession, and place of abode, of all who are denominated in it. At the end of each year, the Registers are closed by the mayor, and one of the two copies is deposited at the Archives of the mayoralty and the other at the Register Office of the Tribunal of first appeal.

Under our present government the Law grants no civil power to our clergy ; the priests have however retained their ancient custom of making Parish Registers, which Registers have no weight whatever. During the Revolution, Registers must have suffered many irregularities, particularly in those departments where civil war raged. I myself know them to have been burnt in several towns."

(1) A search was once made at R——— in Kent, by a person who used every means to rid himself of the clerk's presence, but finding it unavailing, and that he could not be left alone, he offered him a sum of money to assist him in the alteration of an entry which he pointed out.

In making searches in Registers of Parishes within the Bills of Mortality, a facility is afforded by the Company of Parish Clerks ; by paying a fee of about two guineas, a circular is sent to all the Parish Clerks, with the particulars of information required ; the Registers are accordingly searched and the result communicated to the Clerk of the Company.



gistrar, and the Clergyman only the Transcriber; and at the end of the year, he signs his name to some hundreds of Entries of Baptisms and Burials, of the half of which he can have but little or no recollection, and must therefore trust to the punctuality and correctness of the clerk. The Register of Carshalton is one commencing in 1538, and has been kept with great accuracy, except from 1644 to 1651, during which time *are no Entries whatever*, and by a memorandum in the Register, Mr. Quelch, the then Vicar, imputes this defect to the troubles of the times, *and to his trusting to the Parish Clerk to make minutes*, from which he, the Vicar, might once a year, make Entries in the book, *as had long been the custom*, but that the clerk, though often called upon and always promising, never gave the account. (1)

In rectifying mistakes in Parish Registers, whether discovered at the time of writing the Entry or not, great

(1) An ejectment cause was tried at the Spring Assizes in 1828, for the County of Worcester, where the question was, whether the defendant, Aaron Bray, was the legitimate Son of his Father. On the part of the defendant, the Register of Baptisms of the Parish of Castlemorton for the year 1776 was produced, which contained an Entry of Baptism of Aaron, the Son of John Bray, and Elizabeth his Wife, on the 6th of February, 1776. It appeared, however, that the Entry was in the handwriting of the Rev. Dr. Smith, and that he did not become Minister of the Parish till 1777; that during the years 1775 and 1776, the then Incumbent of the Parish was very infirm, and that the then Clerk, entered on slips of paper an account of the Baptisms, &c.; and his Memoranda, which had been preserved, were produced, and there was no doubt that Dr Smith had made from them the Entries in the Register Book. It was objected that neither the Register or the Memoranda were admissible in Evidence; but Mr. Baron Vaughan received them. Upon a motion, however, for a new Trial, Mr. Justice Bayley said, "the Register ought not to have been received in Evidence. Registers should be made up promptly, and by the person whose duty it is to make them up. The Register of Baptism, in this case, purports to bear date the 6th of February, 1776, but it was not made up till June 1777, and then it was made up, not by the person who was minister of the Parish at the time of Baptism, or by a person who appeared at that time to have any connexion with the Parish, but by one who afterwards became the Minister of the Parish. It must be taken, therefore, that he made this Entry after the death of the Minister of the Parish, who was present at this Baptism. He was recording a fact, therefore, not within his own knowledge, but one of which he received information from the Clerk." The Court, therefore, held that neither the Register or the Clerk's Memoranda were admissible in Evidence, and the Rule for a new Trial was made absolute accordingly. 8 Barn and Cres. 813.



care should be taken. It has been observed that "Erasure is not the legitimate mode of correction;" the more safe method is to draw a line with ink through the incorrect parts, and write the proper words or figures above, and then to notice the alteration in the margin of the book.(1)

In making searches for Entries, it may be recommended to the Clergyman, before he comes to any conclusion; to search the Book himself, (and not trust it to a clerk to do); and if the Entry is not found, to signify that fact to the party interested, and not to assert that the Register contains no such Entry as the one sought for; (2) and this recommendation will have greater claim to attention, should the search be in any of the old Registers which are very frequently begun in several different parts, both at the beginning and end, rendering certainty as to its actual contents very dangerous. The Index for this purpose will be of great use as forming another source from whence to ascertain if a particular Entry exists.

And with respect to Indexes they are of the greatest assistance, and save, in many instances, immense time and labour in making searches. Mr. Cole, whose manuscripts are now deposited in the British Museum, has observed, that the value and usefulness of a book is greatly enhanced by the addition of a good index; and if this observation applies to books in general, it will be intitled to double weight in its application to Parish Registers. The compilation of a good index does not require great skill; and it has been observed by a clergyman, that the time he had wasted in turning over the leaves of his Register in search of Entries, would have served him to make several complete Indexes, besides saving the book from the constant friction of the hands and fingers, tending to wear it out and obliterate the writing. In the parishes of Keg-

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(1) See 53 George III. cap. 146, sec. 15, for directions on this point.

(2) Bigland.

worth in Leicestershire, and Cogenhoe in Northamptonshire, are Indexes by the Christian Name thus :—

Ann Smith  
Andrew Burton  
Amy Dove.

But this is greatly inferior to the Index by the surname, which it is hoped will be generally adopted. The Register of Maidstone, with a population of from 10 to 15,000, contains an Index of all the names mentioned in the Register from the year 1732 to the present time ; and the custom is, when the Clergyman makes an Entry in the Register, that he always makes a reference to it in the proper Index.

A great many old Registers, in consequence of having been left in damp places, and otherwise neglected, are now in a very mutilated and almost unintelligible condition, and will of course become worse and worse every year ; although a copy might not have the same weight as the original, yet as it would be better than none at all, and might assist in deciphering the original, the necessity of the attention of the Legislature to this subject must be apparent. It should be observed, that the proposal of transcribing is by no means novel, having been practised, in pursuance of the Canon in 1603, and the Transcripts made in pursuance of that Canon, have at the present day the same authority, with respect to Evidence, as an Original Document ;<sup>(1)</sup> and had the Canon just alluded to never been issued, posterity would have been in a much worse condition than they are at present, as will appear by reference to a former Chapter on the subject of " Preservation."<sup>(2)</sup>

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(1) At least no case can be met with where it has been questioned ; and yet these Transcripts have been found not to correspond with the original ; for some Parishes possess both the Original and Transcript.

(2) It has been observed, that " it is the multiplication of copies of the authentic histories of countries and places, and especially of useful records and papers which tends to avert the effects of Wars, Revolutions, and Neglect."

Should the state of some of these Registers engage the attention of Parliament, the method of obtaining a faithful verbatim Copy of the Original might be very easily laid down ; and when obtained should be signed on every page by the Minister<sup>(1)</sup> and Churchwardens, and an affidavit made by them in support of its accuracy and correctness, and the Original might then be sent to the Bishop of the Diocese, to be placed in his Archives, unless he should already be in possession of a perfect Transcript, which with respect to those early Registers, from 1538 to 1597, would be the case but in a very few instances ; for the Canon, directing the Bishop of the Diocese to be furnished with a Transcript did not issue until 1597, and did not require a Transcript of the antecedent Registers for the Bishop.<sup>(2)</sup>

With respect to the insertion of the time of Birth in the Entry of a Baptism, it may be observed, that the Bill of the 52 Geo. III. had provided a Column for the Entry of this particular, but it was struck out, in the progress of the Bill through the House of Lords, but it no doubt, escaped observation in the Lords, that the Title of the Bill still remained for “ the better regulating and preserving Parish and other Registers of *Births*, Baptisms, &c.” and this has led to Enquiries why the Act should intimate its purport to extend to Births, and yet provide no Columns for them, or take (except in one instance) any subsequent notice of that particular. It has been urged that the Clergyman only enters such particulars as come under his own observation, and that therefore as to the time of Birth, he knows nothing ; but such an argument is far from being of sufficient weight, for in a great many cases he does not know that

(1) In the Register of Cranbrook in Kent is a memorandum, that the Vicar undertook the transcription directed by the Canon of 1603, that it might be more faithfully performed.

(2) Dr. Burnaby, Archdeacon of Leicester, in his charge to his Clergy, recommends, while the measure is practicable, to have accurate and faithful copies made of the Registers which are perishing and becoming illegible.

the Child he baptizes is the Child of the persons whose names he enters as the Parents,—in addition to this he can form a judgment of the age of an Infant brought to be baptized yet cannot enter it; while in the Entry of Burial he is compelled to insert the age of the deceased from the Information (very frequently) of the Undertaker. There does not appear any valid objection to a Column for this date, as it can generally be given with great accuracy, and there can seldom be any motive of prospective advantage (except in cases of illegitimacy) which could induce parents to withhold the truth. In addition to this, the presence of the Godfathers and Godmothers, or other Friends and Relations would be a check upon any misrepresentation<sup>(1)</sup>. There is another reason why the time of Birth should be stated—it is urged that the Entry can be no *Evidence* of the Fact; be it so, but there appears no objection to its being *Information* of it.

A correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for

(1) In the case of *Wiher v. Law*, in 1821, a Register of his Christening was produced by the Defendant to prove his Infancy at a particular time, from which it appeared, that he was christened in the year 1807, but the Entry also stated that he was born in the year 1799.

Bayley, J. was of opinion, that the Entry relating to the time of his Birth was not evidence of the fact, if it did not appear upon whose Information the Entry had been made, and the Clergyman who made the Entry, had no authority to make Enquiry concerning the time of Birth, or to make any Entry concerning it in the Register.

The Jury found for Plaintiff, and in the ensuing Term, *Marryatt* moved for a New Trial, contending that at all events the Entry was Evidence to confirm the statement of the Mother, who had been examined as a Witness for the Defendant at the Trial.

But the Court were of opinion, that the Entry was nothing more than something told to the Clergyman at the time of the Christening, concerning which he had not power by Law to make an Entry. He had neither the authority, nor the means of making an Entry. If it had appeared that the Entry had been made by the Direction of the Mother, it might perhaps, if required, have been received in Evidence, for the purpose of confirming her testimony; but even then it would have amounted to nothing more than a mere declaration by her, as to the age of her Son made at a time when there was no motive on her part to misrepresent his age.—Rule refused. 3 Starkie 63.

1813, supports the practice of inserting the day of Birth, "for that an heir would like to know the precise day he became of age, that it is useful in application for Priests and Deacons Orders, and as Evidence of the right of voting at Elections, &c. (1) The following Extract from the Register of St. Peter's, ——— of the Baptism of three Children of a Family baptized at one time, and the youngest first baptized, shews the necessity of this additional information.

" No. When born.		Baptized.	
1467	Oct. 24, 1812	Nov. 29, 1812	Ann Jane, Daughter of Hen. Pidding, Mariner
8	June 25, 1806	Do.	Agnes Do
9	Apr 9, 1804	Do.	John, Son of the above, and Mary (formerly Williams) his Wife."

If, however, there should be substantial objections to a *Coleman* for the Insertion of Births, it is most necessary that Clergymen should impress upon their parishioners how far their interest, as well as their duty, requires them to bring their Children to the Baptismal Font, as soon after their Birth as possible.

The decision in the Case of *Withen v. Law* which has been just noticed, was upon an Entry prior to the passing of Mr. Rose's Act. Now it may be seen upon reference to the Order of Cromwell in 1653, that Registers were to contain "the days of the month and years of Birth," &c. and no mention whatever is made of *Baptism*. In subsequent Acts Birth or Baptism is mentioned, and it therefore seems that

(1) The Register of Meldstone contained the date of Birth, as well as Baptism for many years, in columns set apart for that particular, and they were received as Evidence in the Court of Burghmote, upon the application of parties (on attaining 21) to be admitted to the Freedom of the Corporation.

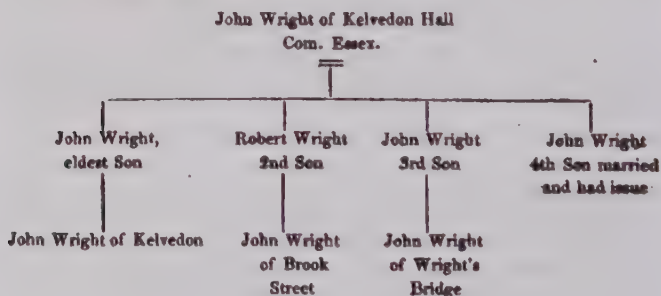
The Clergyman of a very populous Parish in the vicinity of London has been in the habit of entering Births, as well as Baptisms, until very lately, when upon some misunderstanding on the subject of remuneration for making the Bishop's Transcript, he began and still continues to refuse to enter Births.



however correct this decision would be, with reference to Entries in Registers subsequent to 1812, yet a distinction should be made in favour of the Evidence of the time of Birth appearing by Entries made under the authority of those Acts, which direct the time of Birth to be registered, and in which cases it was a part of the Clergyman's duty to see that that particular was correctly stated.

With respect to the present Contents of Parish Registers, it is contended, that they would be still imperfect, even were every Baptism, Marriage, and Burial punctually entered, and for these reasons: suppose a very common case, that in a Parish there are two or three large Families of the same name, many of the Individuals of those Families having the same Christian name, marrying women of different Families, but having a Christian name alike. In fact, there are instances in abundance where there are (e. g.) three John Smiths in a Parish, each having a Wife named Mary. In the Entry therefore of their Children in the Register how can they well be distinguished, but by inserting the Wife's Maiden Name. Without this additional Information the Proof of a Pedigree of two or three Descents, if attainable, would occasion infinite expence and trouble.

Bigland mentions the Family of Wright of Kelvedon Hall in Essex thus:—



Several Families are known *now* to the author, where there are five or six cousins having the same christian name, which occasions, even amongst their immediate friends and relations, frequent mistakes.

The form of Entries of Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials, as proposed by the author, is added at the end of this chapter; the great improvement being the embodying of information, which may enable posterity to ascertain the *identity* of parties, (the want of which has often been the cause of infinite trouble and expence); and also assist in pointing out where Entries of Baptism, &c. may be found. In cases of Burial of Adults, it may not be *always* in the power of the relatives to give the information necessary to fill up the Form, but in most instances, the requisite particulars will be forthcoming; and although the Register may not be *Evidence* of this additional information, it may, as has been urged with respect to the Entry of Births, be *Information* which will *lead* to Evidence. For this purpose, were it practicable, every Entry of Baptism should state the names of the Godfathers and Godmothers, as it would assist in identifying the parties, by showing that certain persons who were known friends or relatives of the Family had stood in that capacity at the Baptism.

## PROPOSED FORM OF BAPTISM.

When baptized	When born	Child's Christian Name	Father's name and Mother's Maiden name	Parish where Parents married	Parents present abode	Quality, Trade, or Profession	By whom the Ceremony performed
6 Jan <sup>r</sup> 1830	14 Dec <sup>r</sup> 1819	John Son of	John Onslow and Ann Green	St. Albans	St. Albans	Gentleman	

## BURIAL.(1)

Name	Atode and description	If Husband or Widower, Wife or Widow, state where married If single where baptised	Age	Name of Father and Mother or of Husband or Wife	When buried	When died	By whom the Ceremony performed
John Adams	Hampstead Draper	Widower, married at Hampstead.	48	Wm. Adams and Ellis, Wharton	30 Jan <sup>y</sup> 1828	24 Jan. 1828	
John Onslow	Hampstead	baptised at St. Albans	10	John Onslow and Ann Green	30 Jan <sup>y</sup> 1830	23 Jan. 1830	

## MARRIAGE.

John Baker of the } Parish                      Gentleman, baptised at  
    this }  
 Son of Charles Baker and Caroline his Wife, formerly Caroline Hayes, Spinster.  
 And Jane Scott of the } Parish                      Spinster, baptised at  
    this }  
    Daughter of William Scott and Ann his Wife, formerly Ann  
 Walker, Spinster, Were married in this Church } by Banns } with consent of  
    Chapel }                      Licence }  
 Parents } this                      day of                      in the year  
 Guardians }  
    By me J. J. Rector  
    Vicar  
    Curate

This Marriage was solemnized by us  
    John Baker  
    Jane Scott

In the presence of us

A B  
 C D  
 E F

(1) Very nearly the same forms of Entry of Baptism and Burial were approved by the Bishop and Archdeacon, and by the Churchwardens and Parishioners in Vestry, and were used for nine years in a parish containing 6000 inhabitants. Vide "Forms of and Observations upon Parish Registers, particularly Marriage Registers. By the Rev. Samuel Partridge, M. A., F. S. A., Vicar of Boston, 1809."

**A D D E N D A.**





## A D D E N D A.

### FLEET MARRIAGE REGISTERS, &c.

HAVING been permitted by Mr. Shephard, the Registrar of the Bishop of London, to peruse the Books lately purchased by Government, and formerly belonging to the Fleet, the Mint, the King's Bench, May Fair, &c. the Author was enabled to insert a few Entries in the Chapter on Marriage Registers. He has since met with other particulars, which as they have never yet been published, he considers sufficiently interesting to be inserted, although too late to be placed with those already given.

“June y<sup>e</sup> 13<sup>th</sup>, 1744, Whereas one Joshua Lilley, being a noted man (1) for having more Marriages at his House than the generality of y<sup>e</sup> people could have, he the said Joshua Lilley keeping several Plyars, as they are call'd, to gett these weddings, I have put his Marriages down in separate Book, but finding Ill conveniences arise thereby fro<sup>m</sup> this 13<sup>th</sup> instant, do insert it w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> rest.”

“November 5<sup>th</sup> 1742 was married Benjamin Richards of the parish of St. Martin in the Fields, B<sup>t</sup> & Judith Lance D<sup>o</sup> Sp— at the Bull and Garter and gave g & for an antidate to March y<sup>e</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> in the same year, which Lilley comply'd w<sup>th</sup> & put 'em in his

---

(1) This man pretended to hold his appointment from the Lord Chancellor, and to have given £1000 for it.

Book accordingly, *there being a vacancy in the Book suitable to the time.*(1)

" On Tuesday Aprill the 20<sup>th</sup> 1742 came a man & woman to the Bull & Garter the man pretended he would marry y<sup>e</sup> wo-  
man by we'h pretence he gott money to pay for marrying & to buy  
a ring, but left the woman by herself and never returned, upon  
which J. Lilley takes the woman from the Bull & Garter to his  
own house and gave her a Certifycate as if she had been married  
to the man. The Maid a Welch Girl call'd ——— brought me  
a Guinea to change and told me the story."

" Jn<sup>o</sup> Ellis & Jane Davis, she being dead left a house in y<sup>e</sup>  
Market Place in Ailsbury 2 Flower pots at y<sup>e</sup> Door. Wanted by y<sup>e</sup>  
Soror & Wax Work a Sham C of y<sup>e</sup> Nupt Oct<sup>r</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 1739."

" June 10. 1729 Jbhn Nelson of y<sup>e</sup> Pa of St George Hanover  
Batchelor and Gardener & Mary Barns of the same Sp: married  
Jn<sup>o</sup> Flood Min<sup>r</sup>

Cer: dated 5 November 1727 to please their parents."

" Wanted 18 years back"(2)

15<sup>th</sup> offered me 10<sup>s</sup> 6<sup>d</sup> to fill up a blank in Mr. Flood's Name  
& Books."

" John Thomas Briquett of the Pa of St Giles's Attorney at  
Law and Sara Jarman of the Pa of St Anns Westm<sup>r</sup> W & Sp  
mar: by me in Newgate some years since  
in Major Barnardy's Room Jn<sup>o</sup> Flood Cler<sup>k</sup>

" Aug<sup>a</sup> 31<sup>st</sup> 1738 James Clement Gent of St. Edmund y<sup>e</sup>  
King London B<sup>r</sup> & Eliz Taylor of St Pauls Covent Garden Sp<sup>r</sup> at  
Farrells Bagnio in Long Acre—£5 . 5 . 0"

(1) This and the following Entry shew to what lengths these Fleet Parsons  
would go for the sake of money, and fully corroborate the note in page 123. This  
is the only proof met with in these Books of the antedate of an Entry, although they  
frequently mention that the *Certificate* given to the married Couple was antedated.  
The blanks left in different parts of the Register Books were occasioned by the  
couple not paying for the Registry of the Marriage, in which case the Entry in the  
Book was only of the *Christian* names of the parties, and there was pinned upon the  
blank a slip of paper, with the surname and other particulars, which were transcribed  
into the blank, as soon as the money was brought for registering.

(2) Wanted the Entry antedated 18 years!

" May y<sup>e</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> 1740 James Wheeler Drum<sup>r</sup> of y<sup>e</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Regim<sup>t</sup> & Catherine Smith W & W—At ye new Bawdy-house joyning Grinley's"

" June the 21, 1741. Thomas Millis Butcher of Kingston-upon-Theams B<sup>t</sup> & Mary Jarvis of S<sup>t</sup> Clement Dean Sp. M<sup>rs</sup> Crooks.---N. B. Madam Roberts the player who lives in Duke Street Weetminster came w<sup>th</sup> them & a Barronight who keeps her came with them."

" Jan<sup>y</sup> 4, 1743-4 Thomas Brown of the first Troop of Horse Guards Wid<sup>r</sup> & Mary Hope of St Pancras—at the Shepherd & Goat—N. B. This s<sup>d</sup> Thomas Brown that took the Standard at Dedingen."

" June 26 1744 Nathaniel Gilbert Gent of St Andrews Holborn and Mary Lupton---at Oddy's---N.B. There was 5 or 6 in Company, one amongst seem'd to me by his dress & behavi<sup>r</sup> to be an Irishman. He pretended to be some Grand Officer in the army. He y<sup>e</sup> said Irish Gent told me before I saw y<sup>e</sup> woman y<sup>t</sup> was to be married y<sup>t</sup> it was a poor Girl a going to be married to a Common Soldier but when I come to marry them I found myself impos'd upon and having a mistrust of some Irish Roguery, I took upon me to ask what y<sup>e</sup> Gentleman's name was, his age &c. and likewise the Lady's name & age— Answer was made me---What was that to me G. . dam me if I did (not) immediately marry them he would use me ill; in short apprehending it to be a conspiracy I found myself obliged to marry them in Terrorem---N. B. Some material part was omitted."

" 1742 May 24 A Soldier brought a Barber to the Cock who I think said his name was James, Barber by Trade, was in part married to Elizabeth they said they were married enough."

" 1717 Feb 4 } Cha Bowles of Southwark Merchant &  
at his own House } Dorothy Hunt of Lower Areley in Worster-  
Southwark } shire. W & Sp"

" I have put a secret Wedding in my private Book of Memorandum on this day" (Nov. 5. 1742) (1)

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(1) A separate Book was kept for the purpose of inserting Marriages which were desired to be kept secret. Upon perusal of a private Book of this sort from

"Entered in Lilleys Book by an unknown hand,---Dec' 1 1716 Dan Paul St James's Capt<sup>a</sup> in y<sup>e</sup> Horse Guards. Elizabeth Murray B. Sp."

"March y<sup>e</sup> 4<sup>th</sup> 1740 William (1) and Sarah he, dress'd in a gold waistcoat like an Officer, she a Beautifull young Lady with 2 fine diamond Rings and a Black high Crown Hat & very well dressed---at Boyce's"

"N. B. There was 4 or 5 young Irish Fellows, seem'd to me after y<sup>e</sup> Marriage was over to have deluded y<sup>e</sup> young woman---gave d Clk y & : (?) N. B. behaved roguishly, Broke the Coachman's Glass"

"N. B. married at a Barbers Shop next Wilsons viz. one Kerrills for half a Guinea, after which it was extorted out of my pocket and for fear of my life delivered"

"20 May 1737 Jn<sup>o</sup> Smith Gent of St James West<sup>r</sup> Batch<sup>r</sup> & Eliz Huthall of St Giles's Sp<sup>r</sup> at Wilson's. By y<sup>e</sup> opinion after matrimony my Clark judg'd they were both women, if y<sup>e</sup> person by name John Smith be a man, he's a little short fair thin man not above 5 foot."

"After marriage I almost co<sup>d</sup> prove y<sup>m</sup> both women, the one was dress'd as a man thin pale face & wrinkled chin." (?)

"Thomas Monk Sawyer & Marg<sup>t</sup> Lawson pawn'd to Mr. Lilley a handkerchief & silver Buttons for 2"

"N. B. y<sup>e</sup> woman was a Neighbours Daughter, the Sister raised a Mob & s<sup>d</sup> my maid was my W-----"

1748 to 1753, it appears that nearly all the contracting parties were of a superior station in Life, the additions being "Gent. and Sp."

(1) In a great many instances the parties refused to tell their surnames.

(2) Letters were used to denote the Sums received for fees, in the same way as they are now used by Tradesmen for their private marks.

(3) Upon perusal of some of the Fleet Pocket Books, an Entry was met with of some parties who wanted some one "to personate," it is not therefore improbable that the John Smith above mentioned was a woman, and that it was done to establish Evidence of the Marriage of John Smith, Gent. of St. James's, Westminster. A similar circumstance is said to have taken place at Margate a few years since, a woman living with a Gentleman of property who was infirm, procured another woman to personate him, and the two women were thus married; and upon the death of the gentleman, the wife took his property under an administration.

Amongst the Books of Fleet Marriages, is a Quarto Book of Marriages, in and after 1732, by the Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Barrett, who by the Entries appears to have been to the King's Bench prison what the Fleet Parsons were to the Fleet Prison, as most of the Marriages are performed either in the King's Bench Prison, or the immediate neighbourhood of it. This Book contains an unusual number of Baptisms, in which the names, &c. of the Parents are mentioned, which is not the case with the Entries of Baptism in the Fleet Registers.

To the Entries of Baptism in the Fleet Registers are generally added the names of three Witnesses present, and the Baptism of Blacks very frequently occur, and may be accounted for in the following way: it was necessary to procure the Bishop's Licence, for the Baptism of Blacks, in the regular manner in the Church, which was a trouble and expence, whereas the Clergymen at the Fleet no doubt dispensed with this Licence and ventured to perform the Ceremony without leave of the Bishop. The following is one of the Entries:—

“ Sept' 27 1744. Rum John Pritchard a Indian & Mahomitan  
baptized this day by Self at Mr. Pritchard's”

John Stewpan	} Witnesses
Adam Henley	
Mary Pritchard	

It has been stated in page 119, that the Fleet Registers commence in 1682, there is however one Book commencing earlier; in the first page of it is, “ Marriages solemnised by Dr. Thomas Hodgkins, Minister of the Fleet Chappell and Rules thereof. Nov 6<sup>th</sup> 1674.”

Among the Records in the Bishop of London's Registry is the following Letter on the subject of Fleet Marriages, which as it describes the general practices of the Fleet Parsons, and that the Bishop held a Visitation in the Prison in consequence, shall be given at length:—



" Sir

" I think it my Duty to God and y<sup>e</sup> Queen to acquaint you with y<sup>e</sup> illegal practices of y<sup>e</sup> Ministers and Clark in y<sup>e</sup> Fleet Chappell for marrying Clandestinely as they do som weeks fifty or sixty couple. The Ministers that are there are as follows M<sup>r</sup> Rob<sup>t</sup> Elborough he is an ancient man and is master of y<sup>e</sup> Chapple and marries but very few now without Banns or Licence, but under a colour doth allow his Clark to do w<sup>t</sup> he pleases, his name his Barth: Basset. There is there also one M<sup>r</sup> James Colton a Clergyman he lives in Leather Lane next door to y<sup>e</sup> Coach and horses, he hath bin there these four years to marry, but no Prisoner, he marries in Coffee-houses, in his own house and in and about y<sup>e</sup> Fleet gate and all y<sup>e</sup> Rules over not excepting any part of city and Suburbs. This Clark Basset aforesaid registers wherever Colton marries in y<sup>e</sup> Fleet Register and gives him Certificates. Colton had a living in Essex till y<sup>e</sup> Bishop of London deprived him for this and other ill practices. There is also one M<sup>r</sup> Nehemiah Rogers, he is a Prisoner but goes at larg to his P Living in Essex, and all places else, he is a very wicked man as lives for drinking whoring and swearing, he has struck and boxed y<sup>e</sup> bridegroom in y<sup>e</sup> Chapple and damned like any com<sup>on</sup> souldier, he marries both within and without y<sup>e</sup> Chapple like his brother Colton. There was one M<sup>r</sup> Alley he was a Prisoner and y<sup>e</sup> benefit of weddings but is gone to some other preform<sup>t</sup>. The abovesaid Basset rents y<sup>e</sup> sellers of y<sup>e</sup> Fleet and pays for y<sup>e</sup> and two watchmen 100 and £20 p ann but he him pays but £20 per ann for y<sup>e</sup> Clergy pay all y<sup>e</sup> rest monthly and if they do not they are threatened to be confined or outed. This Clark hath bin sworn in D<sup>r</sup> Commons not to marry any without Banns or Licence unless it be such poor people as are recomended by y<sup>e</sup> Justices in case of a big belly, but have married since many hundreds as I and many can testifie who are confined Prisoners. The chief days to marry are Sundays Tuesdays and Saturdays, but evry day more or less. The Clark Basset keeps a Register book, altho he told y<sup>e</sup> Bishop of London he had none, he also antidates as he pleases as you may see when you look over y<sup>e</sup> Registers, he hath another at his sons, he does what he pleases and maintains a great family by these ill practices. £200 p ann he hath at least. The Ministers and Clark bribe one M<sup>r</sup> Shirley I think him to be Collector for y<sup>e</sup> Queen's Taxes I

hope Sir you will excuse me for concealing my name hoping y<sup>e</sup> you will inspect into these base practices.

For

D<sup>r</sup> Newton Chancell<sup>r</sup>  
to my Lord of London  
at D<sup>n</sup> Commons  
These

4<sup>th</sup> Junii 1702 Cor Reverendoxi  
Dno Epo London in Carcere vulgo  
vocat y<sup>e</sup> Fleet in Civitate London,  
pesente Ed Alexander

Neg<sup>m</sup> Visitaconis in Carcere vulgo }  
vocat y<sup>e</sup> Fleet London

Comp<sup>t</sup> Mag<sup>r</sup> Jeronimus Alley Clecus D<sup>i</sup> Epus  
monuit eum ad exhibend D<sup>no</sup> Cancellario ejus L<sup>r</sup>as Ordinum ntra  
24 diem Junii instan & his Lord<sup>s</sup> ordered him not to marry or per-  
form any divine Office in y<sup>e</sup> Chappell in y<sup>e</sup> Fleet or in any place  
withyn y<sup>e</sup> Dioces untill he has exhibited y<sup>e</sup> same.

M<sup>r</sup> Alley soon afterwards fled from y<sup>e</sup> s<sup>d</sup>  
Prison & never exhibited his orders.

From the old Church Book of Boughton Blean, in  
Kent.<sup>(1)</sup>

" 1530, William Shrubsall. Henry Norman Wardens of the  
same Church . . . Pyshyers of the same Town have chosyn John  
Teac<sup>m</sup> and Richard Norman to be . . . to ged<sup>r</sup> the rents and to se the  
. . . .tapers for the qwer & ber uppe & . . . (down) & se the C—  
Syrples & coppe connyd to the p . . . (procession).

" John Tenacre & Richard Norman.

(1) This book is noticed in page 8, where only two Extracts were given, under an impression that the other particulars (furnished by the kindness of the Rev. J. W. Wrighte) were to be found in Lewis's Feversham, 4to. 1727; as, however, this is not the case, they are added here.

" It to Saynt Jamys lyght in the hand of Yong l Kew rec x' to Saynt Margret lyght in the hands of John Downkyn on kowe rec x' surty Stevy Norman.

" It to owr Lady lyght in the hands of Pet' Ince on Kowe & John Clyfford a surty for the same.

" 1531 Richard Jacob William Shrubsall Wardens of Bocton. Also we the holl Pysh have chosyn Richard Norman & Thomas Spycer to be the other Wārdens to geyther the rents & to thestykyng of the tapers for the qwere & to beyr up & down the ornamets & se the coyp & syrples born to Cant to the Pseion.

" It John Smyth for Saynt Margret lyght hath vi cwys. It in hands of Thomas Teac~ for the Stok of Saynt Kateryn lyght viij<sup>d</sup> iij<sup>d</sup>.

" It in hands Rychard Spycer for Saynt Pet' lyght viij cwys. Anno dni m<sup>o</sup> d xxxv<sup>m</sup> This yere Corpus Christi play was plaid at boughton Strete. M<sup>d</sup> Stevy Wyls hayth cowntytt for the fyrst play day iiii<sup>n</sup>, v<sup>s</sup>. x<sup>d</sup>—

" 1536 In the hands Stevyn Norman a Cowe for Saynt Christoffer lyght rec x' surty Christopher Norman.

" 1558 Also in Coks hands delivred for my Lord Cardynalls bequeste to the Church ix' x<sup>d</sup>— (Q' Cardinal Pole's).

" 1562 M<sup>d</sup> delyv<sup>d</sup> by Edward Songer unto Richard Ponystone of Boughton aforesaid xx' to buy thirw<sup>th</sup> a Cowe to theuse of the Church aforesaid & to delyv a lawful Cowe or xx' unto the Churchwardens of Boughton aforesaid to theuse of the Church at such tyme as shall by the said Wardens for the tyme being lawfully requested and for the Molle or farme ev' yere ii' Suretyes of the same John Austen and John Fayerman xx'.

" 1570 Also they charge themselves w<sup>th</sup> the re<sup>pt</sup> of xvi' x<sup>d</sup> in thands of Ric Cart~ by him rec<sup>d</sup> of Throweley wch came from the lottery."

And in 1574, there is a note of money received from a Lottery for " Castyng the Bells".

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